



**The Politics of  
Shoplifting**

# fifth estate

**End of Money  
An Anarchist in Cuba  
Thinking about CrimethInc.  
Green Scare Continues  
Counterfeiting**

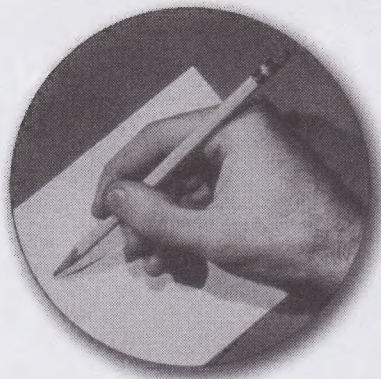
**the root of all evil**

# MONEY



**Summer 2008 Vol. 43 #2 (378) \$4.00**





## To My Dearest Fifth Estate . . . LETTERS



Send letters to [fe@fifthestate.org](mailto:fe@fifthestate.org) or Fifth Estate, POB 201016, Ferndale MI 48220  
All formats accepted including typescript & handwritten; letters may be edited for length

### Amazing Back Cover

I'm writing to ask about the amazing excerpt on the back cover of Spring 2008 Fifth Estate.

Who is or was Erica A. Smith? When was "On the Political Situation Experienced in Our Era" written? Most of the language in the excerpt seems to be late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. But "colonization," in context, seems to be contemporary. Perhaps I'm mistaken, but I don't believe it was used in quite that way a century ago.

Who is the wonderfully beautiful woman in the photo? She seems to be crying, "The Marines are coming!" (as in "The Redcoats are coming!"). Her clothes and coiffure suggest the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. But there was no color photography then, and it wasn't customary to photograph people while they were speaking. She's absolutely entrancing! If she is not shouting "The Marines are coming!," then she must be shouting, "To the Bastille!" (or US equivalent).

**Sherman Harbeson**  
Milton, Fla



**Don LaCoss replies:** I was unable to find any details on Erica Amelia Smith or her *On the Political Situation Experienced in Our Era*—just a few fragments

of the text here and there. Like you, Sherman, I was also struck by the fact that (distressingly enough) it could've been written at any time in the last 100 years and still be relevant.

As for the image: the shrieking redheaded woman is Hollywood actress Nora Hayden, and the picture is a screen-capture from the stupid pseudo-3-D sci-fi B-movie *Angry Red Planet* (1959).

In the film, Hayden plays the traumatized astronaut-scientist whose account of the battle against monstrous Martian life-forms (carnivorous plants, flesh-eating fungus, malevolent amoebas, and an unbelievably weird giant rat/bat/spider/crab) frames the story. In this scene, she's reacting to having seen a Martian face peering into the window of the spaceship after they first land; what she's wearing is her Pentagon-issued spacesuit.

### Personality Type Expert

It is nice to know that Walker Lane is an expert on the personality type of those of us who enlisted in the military (See Spring FE 2008, *Army of None* review). Apparently, Mr. Lane is also highly qualified to judge the choices (past and present) offered to and made by those of us of European heritage (Spring FE 2008, "Escaping from Europe").

Thanks for sharing your B.S. with us, Mr. Lane.

**Don Kliese**  
Madison, Wis.

**Walker Lane responds:** We asked, via email, for the letter writer above to state his objections to my two articles in a less snide manner so that they could be more fully addressed. At press time, we

had received no response.

I assume he objected to my generalization that it is a certain personality type that is willing to submit to military discipline. Additionally, in an era marked by imperial war and occupation with all their attendant horrors, one wonders what motivation would impel anyone to take part in such an enterprise unless they look forward to it.

All four branches of the military reported recruitment *above* their target goal for April, with the Marines coming in at 142 percent of new recruits. This says to me these are men who desire to serve the empire in combat at a time when the horrendous nature of the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan are known to all.

However, it's a matter of, if the shoe fits. There has been small but constant rebellion within the military, and a lot of regrets by soldiers who didn't fully realize what they were getting into. If Kliese is one of these resisters, I'm obviously not talking about him. If he isn't, he's one of those whom the generalization fits.

In my article about Europe, I wasn't discussing individual or even ethnic reasons for emigrating from that continent to this, but rather the internal economic and social pressures that created the desire to escape from one's homeland in such massive numbers.

### Memory of Horst Fantazzini

We would like to inform you about a project launched three years ago to preserve the memory of Horst Fantazzini, an Italian anarchist and artist who spent most of his life in prison, where he eventually died six years

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An anarchist in Cuba.  
He asks, has the Revolution ended,  
or, did it ever begin?



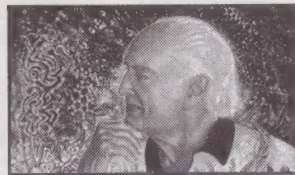
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Counterfeiting: Why nation states  
jealously guard their money  
supply, and isn't all money fake?



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Thinking about CrimethInc, the  
group that almost everyone loves,  
but which some love to hate. Why?



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Albert Hofmann, the inovator of LSD  
dies at 102  
Living Theatre loses a stalwart 44

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Summer  
2008

Vol. 43 No. 2

# Fifth Estate

## Money: Root of all Evil

As several people who have seen this issue prior to publication have noted, the correct quote is "The *love* of money is the root of all evil," but its truncated form seems more accurate than the original. Money itself, not just cherishing it, is the ultimate representation of all that is alienated in the modern world; the driving force of pathological greed; the whip that coerces wage labor; and the basis of wars. The current inequitable split of the planet's wealth now allows ten million millionaires world-wide to control \$37.2 trillion dollars in financial assets assuring a life of immiseration for billions of people.

However, the answer doesn't lie in divvying up more fairly the loot squeezed out of human labor, the earth and its creatures, but rather in an end to the entire economic system that capitalizes and marks all activity, as objects with a value. Much of what this entails comes under the discussion of that which is designated in econo-speak as The Law of Value, but at its simplest, the concept is contained in the John Lennon song, "Imagine,"

"Imagine no possessions  
I wonder if you can  
No need for greed or hunger  
A brotherhood of man  
Imagine all the people  
Sharing all the world"

That said, the irony isn't lost on us of publishing an issue critiquing money, and then asking for it. We realize that money drives our lives and even our anarchist projects, but hopefully much less so than those who covet wealth. Still, our need for it to produce this paper is no less than that of a commercial enterprise. As we go to press, we are \$1,500 short of what we need to pay our printer. If your subscription is expiring, you'll soon receive a renewal notice; we hope you'll keep supporting the radical media movement by renewing and, if possible, adding a donation and a contribution to our prisoner/GI fund. If you're buying this at a newsstand, please know that we benefit substantially less than if you subscribe. Become a Sustainer who takes a yearly role in assuring our survival. See page 50. Or, sponsor a benefit as people have done recently at venues around the country.

Since editorship and production of the Fifth Estate rotates around the country, readers have told us they'd like to know where each of them is produced; this one is back to the city of origin of this publication: Detroit.



The *Fifth Estate* is a cooperative, non-profit, anti-authoritarian project published since 1965 by a volunteer collective of friends and comrades. We are committed to non-dogmatic, action-oriented writing and activity to bring about a new world.

As opposed to professionals who publish to secure wages, or those who invest in the media information industry, we produce this magazine as an expression of our resistance to an unjust and destructive society. No copyright. No paid staff. No ads.

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# Green Scare Continues

More arrests and harsh sentences for planet defenders  
**Fifth Estate writer indicted!**

by H. Read

**D**evelopments in what is being called the "Green Scare" continue at a fast pace as the government increases its attack on forest, animal, and earth defenders. Four environmental campaigners from Detroit including a *Fifth Estate* writer were arrested in March for eco-sabotage. Other activists around the country were subjected to the heavy hand of justice with harsh sentences and arbitrary acts. The possibilities of more arrests and indictments are on the horizon.

The Green Scare is an allusion to the 1950s "Red Scare," which focused on destroying the US Communist Party and sympathizers. Today, the government hopes these arrests of radical environmentalists and animal liberation activists will destroy the political underground of those who use the tactic of property destruction to defend the planet.

Those arrested in the Green Scare have mostly been charged with actions claimed by the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) or Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and have faced charges with disproportionately long sentences, often life in prison. They have been labeled as "terrorists" in public pronouncements by government officials, and in the use of the new Terrorism Enhancement designation. This can be applied by a judge after a plea bargain or conviction, and can make huge additions to sentences.

## **No one have ever been hurt in any of their actions**

The ELF and ALF commit acts of property destruction against companies engaged in environmental destruction and animal exploitation, respectively. Despite the government's attempts to label them "terrorists," both groups prioritize safeguarding people, and no one have ever been hurt in any of their actions. They have, however, cost companies millions of dollars in damages and lost profits, and in return, these companies have successfully pushed the federal government to re-classify those who engage in acts of politically-motivated property destruction as "terrorists."

In March, four Midwest activists, Marie Mason, Frank Ambrose, Aren Burthwick and Stephanie Fultz, were arrested and charged with federal crimes relating to the 1999 destruction of an office linked to GMO research at Michigan State University in East Lansing, and the 2000 destruction of logging equipment elsewhere in the state. All four lived in Detroit at the time of the alleged offenses.

As the latest Green Scare victim, Mason is charged with four federal crimes; if convicted and given the maximum sentence, she will spend the rest of her life in jail. In comparison, the average sentence for a violent offender in 2004 was seven and a half years.

Mason, 46, and mother of two, frequently wrote for the *Fifth Estate* in the late 1980s and early '90s. She also was a long-time activist with Earth First! and the

**Green Scare info on line: [midwestgreenscare.org](http://midwestgreenscare.org),  
[portland.indymedia.org/en/topic/greenscare](http://portland.indymedia.org/en/topic/greenscare), [cldc.org](http://cldc.org),  
[greenscare.org](http://greenscare.org), [spiritoffreedom.org.uk](http://spiritoffreedom.org.uk)**



—photo: Buster Brown

Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), serving on the editorial collective of the *Industrial Worker*, the IWW newspaper, in the early '90s when it was published in Detroit.

Ambrose, on the other hand, is representative of a different feature of those arrested: he spied on his fellow activists (including above-ground groups) and is testifying against them, including his ex-wife Mason, in return for a lighter sentence. In almost all

*Continued on Page 39*



U p until March 10, I lived in a small, wooded, old neighborhood on the edge of Northside in Cincinnati.

That morning, I left the house with just enough time to get to my job while my 16-year-old daughter, Arianna, was asleep in her room. I drove to the end of my block and was startled to see an SUV come around the corner and stop directly in front of my car, blocking my way.

Another vehicle pulled up directly behind me, and suddenly, I was surrounded by several others, including a Cincinnati police car. I was ordered to get out of my car, and that's when it finally dawned on me that I was being busted, although I had no idea for what.

I was frisked by a male FBI agent, my hands cuffed behind my back, and placed in the backseat of a police car. I was finally told that I was under arrest and that anything I said could be held against me. Special Agent James Shearer asked if I wanted to make a statement, but another federal officer from Michigan told him I had already said that I had nothing to say.

I struggled to get to my cell phone out of the pocket of my coat and got off a call to my friends at Cincinnati's Books4Prisoners informing them of the situation and asking them to come over quickly and stay with my daughter.

### **My street filled up with cop cars and agents**

Meanwhile, my street quickly filled up with cop cars and agents. It was a real circus, with media from every outlet in Cincinnati camped out on my lawn, obviously tipped off by the feds that they were making a major "domestic terrorist" bust. My upstairs neighbor, who does daycare in her home, was prevented by the police from picking up the kids from school and had to remain on the premises as the FBI searched my downstairs apartment.

I was taken in a three-car motorcade to the downtown Cincinnati federal building where I was frisked again by both male and female cops, fingerprint-

**Free Marie on line:**  
[www.freemarie.org](http://www.freemarie.org)

**See Page 38 for Free Mariel gear:** Marie Mason's CD, "Not for Profit," and t-shirt. Proceeds go to her defense.

Green Scare FBI agent at the scene of Marie Mason's arrest. Dozens of cops and agents descended on Marie's house to arrest one person. Doesn't look like this one wanted his photo taken.

## **My Green Scare Arrest**

Or, why does it take 30 cops to arrest one person? Couldn't be anything about creating public hysteria against forest defenders, could it?

**by Marie Mason**

ed, and photographed. They made a big deal out of my modesty when they insisted on photographing the dragon tattoo on my stomach, like I was hiding something. I was asked again by Agent Shearer if I wanted to make a statement and told me, "not to wait too long," whatever that meant. I told him again that I had nothing to say, and I was then brought to the chief investigative agent's office and told I could call my attorney.

As I had been the subject of numerous investigations for years and was somewhat prepared. I had previously asked the nearest National Lawyers Guild attorney, Fred Slough in Kansas City, that in case of an arrest, would he be my advisor until I could locate an attorney in Ohio. He had kindly agreed, so I called him for advice. He advocated silence and to use the services of a local public defender until I could secure an attorney of my own. I was taken to a holding cell to await my arraignment. While I was in the lockup, someone from the FBI began calling on my cell phone to various friends and activists whose numbers were listed in my phone book trying to get information.

I was appointed a public defender for my hearing before the presiding judge where I was finally told of my charges—three counts of felony arson and one count of conspiracy involving two actions claimed by the Earth Liberation Front in 1999 at Michigan State University and the next year in Mesick, Michigan, at a logging facility.

### **I was immediately put on suicide watch**

On the public defender's advice, I signed a waiver agreeing not to fight extradition to Michigan and was taken back to my holding cell. I was uncomfortable during the hearing due to a bladder infection I had just developed in jail, but I wasn't allowed to use the bathroom as there was no matron present to escort me. I didn't get medical care for my ailment until three days before my release, though I requested it immediately. After hours of waiting, I was taken to Butler County Jail in Cincinnati.

I was immediately put on suicide watch for no particular reason. Were they hoping? All my clothes were taken from me. I was given a "pickle suit", a velcroed black plastic short vest and showered for lice. I

*Continued on Page 38*

**See Page 39 for a list of eco-actions** Frank Ambrose has confessed to and implicated others.



Demonstrator at 1980 Republican convention held in Detroit holding a *Fifth Estate* Extra demanding:

REPUBLICANS:  
GET OUT OF TOWN!

We mean it: pack your bags and leave Detroit! Take your vile political party, your cadaverous candidate, your stinking love for the state, your vicious racism, your blatant sexism, your hatred for the poor, your insane war plans, your nauseating patriotism, your putrid Christianity, your antiquated sexual morality, your contempt for the rest of the world, your millionaire officials, your middle-class sensibilities, and your pathetic lack of vision, and get out of our town!

—photo: Millard Berry

disrupt their spectacle and prove that we have the power to shape our own communities and future.

In this spirit, anarchists and anti-authoritarians from across the US gathered in Minnesota's Twin Cities last fall to discuss the convention and hash out a framework for resistance. Local anarchists (calling themselves the RNC Welcoming Committee) have been meeting since the convention site was announced for St. Paul, and autonomous cells have popped up around the country under the banner of Unconventional Action.

Through a process of consensus in the main strategizing session and the action breakout that followed, attendees developed a three-tiered strategy for denying delegates access to the RNC on opening day.

The tiers are organized in order of priority according to the number of participants; if a small number of participants show up, only the first tier will be carried out, but if larger numbers are on hand, all three tiers will be in effect.

### Here's the way it will break down:

**Tier One:** Establish 15-20 blockades, utilizing a diversity of tactics, creating an inner and outer ring around St. Paul's Xcel Center, where the RNC is to take place.

**Tier Two:** Immobilize the delegates' transportation infrastructure, including the buses that are to convey them.

**Tier Three:** Block the five main western bridges connecting the Twin Cities.

# RNC: Shut it down!

Welcoming the Republicans to the Twin Cities

by the RNC Welcoming Committee

**T**he 2008 Republican National Convention (RNC) will descend on Minneapolis-St. Paul, Sept. 1-4, as the opening act in the pacifying spectacle of the coming presidential election. The most direct way to oppose a dog-and-pony show is just to stop it.

This convention of the rich, the white, and the conservative, is a self-congratulatory event intended as the opening shot in the attempt to convince the hapless voter that John McSaine represents patriotism, experience, and "our" values, rather than war, empire, economic royalism, and the rest of the miserabilism known as America. Stopping the convention won't stop the election, but it will

## Twin Cities 2008 RNC is begging to be blockaded!

The geography of the 2008 RNC lends itself quite readily to a blockading strategy. Unlike conventions of past years, this one is being held in a city without the capacity to sustain it alone. St. Paul, especially its downtown, is simply not big enough.

Thus, convention-related events are happening all over the Twin Cities metro area, bringing Minneapolis into the fold. Between Minneapolis and St. Paul, there are still

not enough hotel rooms to house the thousands of conventioners who'll be descending on our cities for four days.

So, delegates, media, staff and extras will be housed throughout the Twin Cities metro area requiring all of them to be transported to and from their hotels en masse (mostly on several hundred city buses contracted specifically for that purpose).

Thanks to the mighty Mississippi River, they'll mostly have to be funneled

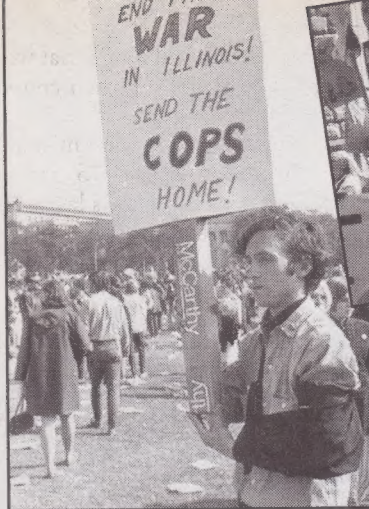
across a small number of bridges, and because of the car culture in which we live, they will only have a limited number of entrances to downtown St. Paul from which to choose.

Few conventions have presented such clear transportation vulnerabilities, and we would be foolish to pass up the opportunities they present.

The 2008 RNC is begging to be blockaded.

8-page tabloid with Convention info: [distro@unconventionalaction.org](mailto:distro@unconventionalaction.org); or POB 765, Winona WI 55987





Convention protests through the years:  
Left: Chicago 1968; right: Miami 1972 —Orin Langelle;  
center: New York City 2004 —Julie Herrada



## Diversity of Tactics & Participants

Calling for blockades sets a radical tone for the day without dictating the forms of resistance that people engage in. Anything from a lockdown, to a pile of gathered materials, to a yoga bloc in an intersection, to a good, old-fashioned traffic jam, helps create the desired effect, and the more diverse the actions, the less likely the cops will be prepared to deal with them.

Last summer's G8 protest in Germany created a change in the landscape of our organizing. Dissent! and Block G8 were able to mobilize huge amounts of people because of the open and participatory manner in which it was organized.

The blockading strategy provides ways for large numbers of people who would likely be excluded from other strategies to plug in through large, effective, accessible actions that bring people closer to their comfort level and provide clear avenues of participation for folks who aren't experienced or aren't already a part of strong militant networks.

Simultaneously, there is ample room for small affinity groups with the capacity to plan and execute their own actions to do so. The blockading framework creates a way for all of these actions to complement each other, resulting in an output greater than the sum of its parts.

## Opening Up Space

Not everyone is into blockading, so fortunately there are a lot of other effective tactics. More mobile and offensive sorts, for example, are difficult to do well in spaces where large numbers of cops have easy access to sites of potential

interest and there is little else going on to hold their attention. Successful execution of the blockading strategy, however, will actually create spaces more conducive to other tactics than we would otherwise see.

## How to Plug In:

At the recent national anti-RNC spokescouncil over Mayday weekend, the scenario of Tier One was further developed into what has been dubbed, "Swarm, Seize, Stay." "Swarm Seize, Stay" is a simple mantra for September 1, and a big picture to direct all of our collective energies towards. Basically, 3S means:

1. **Move** into/around Downtown St. Paul with **swarms** of varying sizes, from multiple directions, and with diverse tactical intentions.
2. **Seize** space through both hard (e.g., lockboxes) and soft (e.g., congestion), fixed and mobile, blockading methods.
3. **Stay** engaged with the situation in downtown St. Paul as long as necessary.

## Get Hooked Up Important Contact Info

The RNC Welcoming Committee has committed to facilitating the protests, including housing, food, transportation (within the cities), legal support, medical care, media infrastructure, and communications.

We need your help! Organize locally, but be in touch if you can be involved in any of these ways.

**Legal:** Coldsnap Legal Collective: coldsnap@riseup.net

**Medical:** North Star Health Collective: northstarhealth@gmail.com

**All other inquiries:** RNC Welcoming Committee: rnc08@riseup.net; Box 4514, St. Paul MN 55104

## Web Updates

Keep your eyes on [www.nornc.org](http://www.nornc.org) and [www.unconventionalaction.org](http://www.unconventionalaction.org) for strategy updates, housing and rideshare boards, as well as lots of other important information.

You may move from location to location, but don't jump ship and bear in mind the ultimate goal of denying access to as many people entering the Xcel Energy Center as possible.

To facilitate the blockades, downtown St. Paul is being broken up into sectors. Each sector will then be taken by groups with some affinity with one another in order to coordinate street-level details. This will ensure that all potential points of access are covered and that complementary tactics will be utilized in close geographic proximity to each other.

Those plugging into this strategy are free to shape their actions as they see fit, using the tactics they consider appropriate. Get your comrades together, discuss your capabilities, look over maps, and start thinking about which sites you might be interested in. Network with others to form a cluster or call for a certain type of swarm. It will soon be time for groups to plug into a sector and adopt specific areas, intersections, streets, on-ramps, or bridges.

See you in the streets!

## Don't Forget the Dems!

Democratic National Convention,  
August 25-28, Denver  
[www.recreate68.org](http://www.recreate68.org)



# An Anarchist in Cuba Socialism or Cell Phones

by Walker Lane

Sign on wall at Frank Pais International airport, Holguin, Cuba.  
—all photos: Walker Lane

**O**n February 2, I stepped off a plane that had left a frigid Toronto three and a half hours earlier and landed in the balmy sunshine of Holguin, Cuba. It was impossible to know then that I had arrived two weeks before the end of the island's Revolution as we know it.

On February 19, the Monarchal Brotherhood passed the scepter of rule from Older Brother to Younger Brother, initially signaling a continuity, not a rupture, of what had come before that date. From all reports, there was no commotion on the island about the change; no great objection, nor celebration. Things were expected to continue as they had.

The changes that signal an end to the Cuban Revolution (more below about what it actually consisted of), were, in fact, changes celebrated internationally as "reforms," "a loosening up," an "entry into the 21<sup>st</sup> century"—the announcement that a host of electronic toys (now thought to almost necessities in most of the world) would be available on the island. Cell phones, DVDs, computers, and Ipods could now be purchased and used. Other improvements (not exactly reforms, but badly needed) such as the purchase of a large number of Chinese buses to replace the crowded, uncomfortable ones that had made travel such a problem for the average Cuban, were welcomed by all. Private plots of land will also be permitted on fallow land.

By virtue of being employed as a full-time journalist, the one category protected by the U.S. 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment, I was able to travel legally to Cuba without violating the so-called Cuban Democracy Act, which among other things prohibits visits there by U.S. citizens. This was my second trip, both times as part of an organized tour, which has positive and negative aspects for one trying to make assessment of the country being visited.

The tours were wonderfully organized and featured amaz-

ingly knowledgeable guides and translators. Most tourists, a large number of whom hail from Canada, are solely interested in beaching it in a warm climate and rarely leave their all-inclusive resorts where the only Cubans they come in contact with are in the service sector. The itineraries of the tours I traveled with were designed to acquaint us with the island—its culture, history, and politics.

I was very aware of the history of the Soviet-American Friendship League tours of the 1930s, when U.S. communists were similarly brought to Stalin's USSR and came away declaring they had seen socialism being built. Being on a tour meant that we had little interaction with Cubans on the street although there was no attempt to restrict us from doing so. My Spanish is so pathetically weak that I doubt whether I would have been able to carry on much of a conversation about politics or the economy in any event. Also, I'm sure I could have found people who loved the Revolution as well as those who were waiting for its collapse.

Given many of the deprivations people experience and the repressive nature of the government, the dissatisfaction is understandable, but in a recent CBS poll taken in the U.S., 82 percent of those questioned said *this* country was on the wrong track. Cuba is a poor country whose economy has been terribly distorted by the U.S. embargo and probably from bureaucratic bungling as well, but still, it probably provides the best material conditions for the poor of any nation in the world, including the U.S.

For a police state, one doesn't see very many police or military as you travel about. However, less obvious to the visitor are the 135,000 Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, neighborhood organizations which are charged with monitoring their fellow citizens for "inappropriate behavior" including not only political offenses, but other forms of anti-social acts such as child or spousal abuse. The committees attempt



to manage behavior at the community level by handing out warnings to citizens, which if not heeded, can lead to criminal charges. There is no organized political opposition, so most activity dealt with is of a social nature. They are also an apparatus for upward mobility through the Communist Party hierarchy.

Amnesty International estimates that Cuba has about 330 political prisoners at any given time, mostly civil rights campaigners, functioning in very small groups or as brave individuals confronting the state. All states are politically repressive to one degree or another; all maintain a system of police and prisons.

### Political prisoners are unacceptable

It is perhaps the height of hypocrisy for a country like the United States to criticize Cuba given this country's own terrible history of suppression of civil rights and liberties, its horrendous prison system, and current torture and detention centers abroad. Still, for those of who desire the end of the political state, we hold to a standard that demands democracy as the key component at every level of decision making. One man at the head of a government for almost 50 years violates this concept, and any number of political prisoners is unacceptable.

There are perhaps four large categories of American thought which provide definitions of the fifty years of Castro rule: 1) the right-wing which views the island as a totalitarian, communist police state where starving people live under daily repressive rule and the government is involved in drug trafficking and terrorism; 2) the center through to the liberal left which agrees, perhaps in the mode of Michael Moore's movie, *Sicko*, that the Revolution has provided good social services for the poor and resisted U.S. hegemony in the hemisphere, but needs to install more democracy and private investment; 3) the organized left which sees very little wrong with the island and views all criticism of it as aid to the U.S. empire, and 4) the anarchist view which, indeed, sees the island as a police state needing a second revolution to install workers democracy, but has no use for calls for returning to private forms of ownership or foreign investment.

Political democracy and the overthrow of elite and police rule is always the goal of any authentic revolution, but so is creating a society of economic and social equity—essentially, anarchist-communism—no government, no capitalism.

In states such as Cuba and the remaining countries that identify themselves as socialist, a ruling apparatus remains and practices what has traditionally been labeled, state capitalism, where the government replaced private entrepreneurs in developing Western capitalism. It hires wage labor, supervises investment, commodities are produced and exchanged for currency, etc. It's the manner in which formerly agricultural nations, from China to Russia, were able to build a modern economy and infrastructure.

Accompanying the state economic structures were draconian political apparatuses that declared, in the words of Fidel seen posted across the island, "With the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, nothing." Of course, it is the government that gets to define what's inside and what is outside. Cuba, however, never has been able to build the industrial infrastructure created by other communist states and, hence, has a population restive for the commodities say see citizens of other nations purchasing.

The right-wing vision of what they refer to as "the return of



A well-stocked farmers market in Holguin, Cuba.

*Cuba is probably the best place in the world for poor people to live, its lack of democracy notwithstanding*

democracy" to Cuba is a bad joke given its history, and, in fact, means the resurrection of its status as U.S. corporate investment target and playground for Western vacationers which it was before 1959. I've heard Cuban-Americans, ones who have never set foot on the island, tell me that until the Communists took over, Cuba "was a wonderful place" where "everyone was happy."

This is willful ignorance in the extreme. In fact, before Castro's takeover in 1959, Cuba was a dictatorship, a torture state that functioned as a whorehouse and gambling den for rich Americans, which allowed unrestrained corporate exploitation run by a corrupt domestic elite that enforced it all for the Mob and U.S. companies. If anything, the Revolution has vastly improved the lot of the common people of the island to the extent that there is a unique phenomena in Cuba, unknown elsewhere among the poor and certainly poor nations, that everyone should have equal access to adequate goods and services. Most poor just assume they won't.

### What they call reform in Cuba

The advocates of what they call reform in Cuba would very quickly force the island into being another Jamaica with a return to deep class divisions, a dependency on tourism, its cities degenerating into crime-filled areas like Kingston, and little or no social services for the poor.

One wonders whether these "democracy" advocates think the poor, or anyone, would be happier in democratic Mexico, where farmers have been ruined by NAFTA and forced into the capital city already bursting at the seams, where *narcotraficantes* battle the cops with automatic weapons, where hundreds of women are murdered in the border regions each year, and vast majority of people live without social services and as a pool of cheap labor for U.S. corporations, or, in totalitarian, commie Cuba, where the basic necessities of life are provided or subsidized?



In every article about the recent brotherly transfer of power, it is always noted that the average Cuban receives \$20 a month from the government in wages, that housing and transportation are major problems, and in right-wing accounts, that the people are starving (a total lie without basis; farmers markets are bursting at the seams with produce, although meat and poultry can be scarce).

The implication is that the Revolution is a failure for being able to provide so little in financial reward for a month's labor. Cuba is a poor country, made poorer by the U.S. embargo, and has always had an official ethos of equity, hence, the small amount of wealth the country possesses is distributed in the most equal manner possible, or such is the official account.

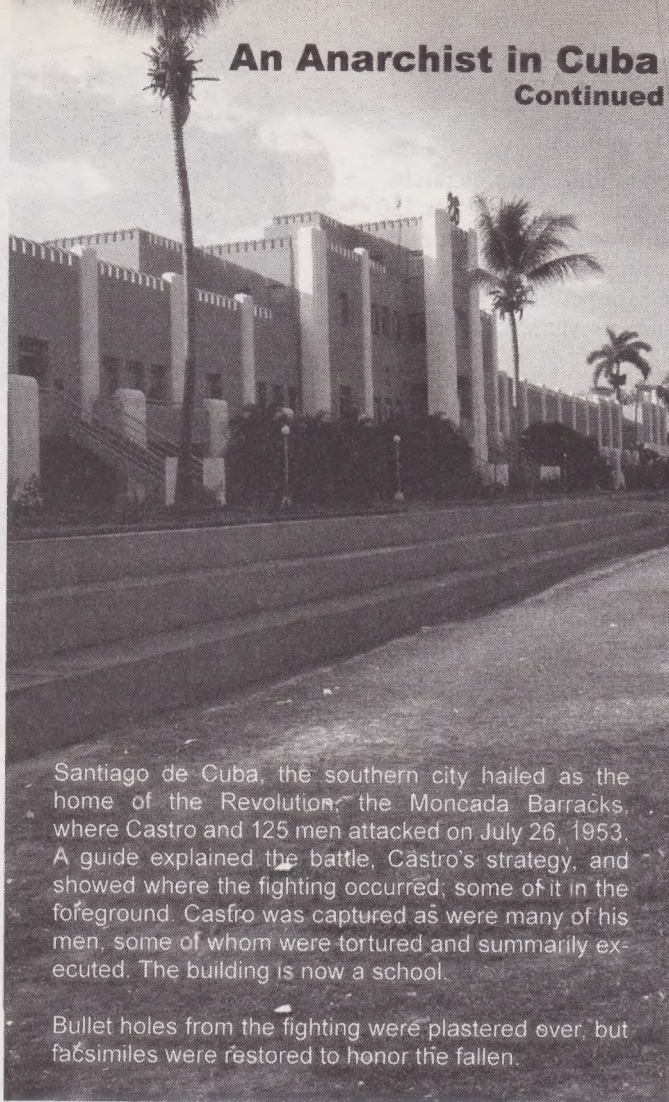
However, Cuban Communist Party bureaucrats and others in so-called sensitive sectors of the economy have always had a wage above the average and an availability of housing, cars, and commodities that most Cubans don't. Now, with an increasing number of joint tourist and industrial investment ventures with foreign companies, there is a growing strata of wage workers in those industries who similarly have an income significantly higher than the average Cuban.

### Listening to Korn on their Ipods

It is not unusual to meet a college professor or doctor working as a guide or interpreter knowing that a week's work can bring them hundreds of Canadian dollars in a week. It will be those who have disposable income who will be able to purchase the newly offered DVDs, cell phones, and the rest of the technological junk that is so appealing. I realize calling it "junk" displays a individual bias. Most citizens of the modern world don't see such items as luxuries, but increasingly as necessities. I'm sure the proliferation of spontaneous music jams, for so long a feature of Cuban urban life, will soon be a quaint exercise performed for the throngs of tourists searching for the "real Cuba" while former street musicians will be listening to Korn on their Ipods.

The sudden permission by Raul to allow purchase of 21" technology gadgets appears to many as a grudging acceptance of a modernity that had been resisted by the geriatric leadership until now. There's delight in some quarters that the seemingly dour world of Cuban communism will see its

## An Anarchist in Cuba Continued



Santiago de Cuba, the southern city hailed as the home of the Revolution, the Moncada Barracks, where Castro and 125 men attacked on July 26, 1953. A guide explained the battle, Castro's strategy, and showed where the fighting occurred; some of it in the foreground. Castro was captured as were many of his men, some of whom were tortured and summarily executed. The building is now a school.

Bullet holes from the fighting were plastered over, but facsimiles were restored to honor the fallen.

Revolution unraveled with the introduction of DVDs, cell phones and video games. In this regard, those desiring Cuba to retake its proper place in the world capitalist order may be correct.

Even with its privileged bureaucracy, its police control, and centralized economy, there has been a vibrant, communal, imaginative aspect to the Revolution, certainly including its vibrant culture, that occurs mostly at the local level such as in women's groups challenging traditional *machismo*, vast community organic gardens, a pride in having defeated and held off the imperialist monster of the north, its health care and education systems which provide a better infant mortality and literacy rate than the U.S., and other successes that have made Cuba a model of what can be done with little. (For instance, Detroit's infant mortality rate is 16 deaths per 1,000 live births; Cuba's is 6.)

### The socialist farm

A recent clandestine poll taken by an organization affiliated with the U.S. Republican Party, "found that more

than half of those interviewed considered their economic woes to be their chief concern while less than 10 percent listed lack of political freedom as the main problem facing the country," according to a June 5 *The New York Times*. If accurate, this indicates widely held attitudes reflecting rising expectations based on an understandable level of dissatisfaction about crumbling infrastructure, inadequate housing, restrictions on mobility, poor transportation, and other shortages, but it also means, how are you going to keep them down on the socialist farm once they've seen capitalist commodities?

This desire for the latter items, Raul's "reforms," suggests strongly that Cuban attitudes are changing in a direction contrary to Che's idea of creating "Socialist Man," the "new freedoms" may become the thin wedge of bringing back what *los barbudos* resisted for half a century. In the same study above, 80 percent of Cubans polled (remembering that this is from a right wing group) stated they wanted a market economy, probably indicating, if the sampling is correct, the hope that a Western economy would provide more of what remains scarce.

Perhaps many Cubans dream of being able to shop like their Miami brethren, but, on this path lies only what other poor nations experience—poverty alongside wealth, limited or non-existent health care and other subsidized government services,



crime, and in Cuba's case, the island could return to being an alternative to the Dominican Republic for American tourists with all that accompanies such an economy. Allowing unbridled foreign investment again—corporate looting—suggests the model of Mexico where corporations flock to the country for its low wages and lack of labor problems. A glimpse of what could be expected is in the recent news of a Mexico City Ford Fiesta plant that announced the halving of wages to \$2 an hour.

Riding on an air conditioned, European-produced tour bus, we easily made it along Cuban roads, some in excellent conditions, particularly the 16-lane ones constructed by the Soviets that could double as landing strips, or, the scenic La Farola road that twists and dips through the Sierra del Purial from outside of Guantanamo City to Baracoa where Columbus visited on his second day in the New (to him) World. Other two-laners were pot-hole-filled, but going slowly through beautiful and historic countryside left no one wishing for a speedier journey.

### Disappointment

My only real disappointment of the trip (surprisingly to the Canadians, as well) was that we had been promised a view of the overlook of the U.S. military and torture base at Guantanamo Bay. Although photographs of the facility are readily available on the U.S. Department of Defense web site (see FE, Winter 2007 "The Food Court at Guantanamo"), the American government made the ludicrous charge that the Cubans were allowing Al-Qaeda operatives to peer in at the base.

Signs of revolutionary exhortation proliferate everywhere—as billboards and on buildings, including one which announced that this was "A Revolution with Energy,!" and displayed a fluorescent bulb of the type that has been installed everywhere on the island. Government workers went door-to-door trading them for the old incandescent ones. There's no way to estimate how the population relates to these signs or whether or not they have an impact on collective consciousness.

When we arrived at a destination, we always had first rate accommodations although curiously, our guides needed permission from the Ministry of Tourism to enter even though one was an officer in the Cuban army reserves and our tour bus and the hotel is administered by *Gaviota Grupo*, a section of the Cuban armed forces devoted to tourism. After a Raul edict in March, Cubans can now stay at tourist hotels, although they are priced way beyond the means of the average citizen. Still, Cubans found the prohibition insulting and were glad to see it ended.

As we drove through narrow city streets with our huge bus, we were aware of the shabby exteriors of most ordinary homes. Our guide said that people don't fix up the outside to avoid ostentatiousness, but that the insides are adequate. From what we could see through open doors, most floors are tiled; there is furniture and a TV. Still, the difference between our tourist

accommodations and the average Cuban housing is striking. Our guide told us the country needs 100,000 new home built each year, but nowhere near that is occurring.

In Santiago de Cuba, the southern city hailed as the home of the Revolution, we visited the Moncada Barracks where Castro and 125 men attacked the dictator Batista's garrison on July 26, 1953. A guide explained the battle, Castro's strategy, and showed where the fighting occurred, some of it where we stood. Castro was captured as were many of his men, some of whom were tortured and summarily executed.

We also went to *El Cemetario Santa Ifiginea* where the tomb of Jose Marti, Cuba's national hero, is located. All was appropriately very solemn, until distorted martial music began blar-

ing from loud speakers and an honor guard of three Cuban soldiers marched from the main building to the tomb thrusting their legs with each step waist high and perpendicular to the ground.

One can't believe that the simple man who this monument rightly honors for his words and deeds would have been comfortable



Signs of revolutionary exhortation proliferate everywhere—as billboards and on buildings, including one which announces that this was "A Revolution with Energy,!" and displayed a fluorescent bulb of the type that installed everywhere on the island.

with this display of extreme distortion of the body in service to militarism. Close to the Marti tomb is one commemorating the martyrs of July 26 with the names of the fallen inscribed on it. Many of Castro's comrades were no more than 18 and one was 14.

### Socio-Cultural Chocolate Trail

From the cemetery, we traveled through the city to the *Casa de Las Religiones Populares*, a dwelling that houses practitioners of a type of *Santeria* or *vudu*. The people there performed music and ecstatic dance numbers for us. This is not usually done for visitors, who are rare. Next door, incongruently, was the headquarters of the District Committee of the PCC (*Partido Comunista Cubano*). The remnants of the primitive adjacent to the representative of the modern, bureaucratic state.

In Baracoa the next morning, we toured *Sendero Sociocultural del Cacao*, the Socio-Cultural Chocolate Trail, which is set up to receive tourists, but like so many other places in this region, we were the only ones there. On site is a 100-year-old working chocolate factory and the cacao is grown on the grounds, as well. Che, himself, is said to have sparked the resurrection of cacao production in 1963 according to a local billboard.

The cacao pods have a sweetish flesh which can be eaten fresh, but the seeds are what produces the chocolate and are extremely bitter to the point of being inedible until dried, ground, and sugar added. Our guide was Alejandro Hartmann, Baracoa's historian and preservationist, who explained the cacao production process. Then, chocolate bars! This facility is also managed by the Army.

Probably the most moving moment of the trip for all of us was when we were welcomed to the compound of the *Grupo Nongon y Kiriba* people, who identify themselves as the descen-

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# Shamanism, Anarchy, and the End of the World

An indiscernible wreck in Bauervic Woods, Southfield, Mich.—photo: Walker Lane

by Dave Hanson

**A**fter twenty years of teaching shamanic practices to small groups in several circles in Washington and California, I found the results to be mixed. In the groups in which I participated, there were many moving visionary experiences, but the flabby jargon of the human potential movement left important messages missed amid incessant psychobabble.

Contemporary shamanism, which grew out of the human potential movement of the Big Sur-based Esalen Institute, rapidly became subsumed into the New Age culture as the latest fad/religion. In two or three decades, aided by workshop leaders, it has become lost into the pop culture. While the permutations were endless, pervasive alienation remained a constant. As always, money, sex, and power ruled.

That shamanism has been compromised is not to say that altered states and working in trance cannot offer us a personal healing direction. I know from experience that lives can be changed through shamanic work. A deep trance, engendered in a variety of ways and entered with intention, can be transforming.

The value of shamanism as taught in the contemporary culture may be that it provides some level of psychotherapy, some level of energetic balance, some palliative response to stress along with feelings of community and slightly less alienation. In some cases, shamanic practice may provide actual healing of disease or easing of struggles with death.

My own struggle with shamanism centered on skepticism

and the understanding that we can fool ourselves into believing almost anything. My training was in agriculture and science. I was not one to accept much on faith. I continued to bounce between shamanic visions as projections of the psyche and as visitations from a separate spiritual world.

By the time I stopped teaching a few years ago, I had come to understand that the distinction probably didn't matter. My work and studies since have convinced me that contemporary religious and psychological shamanism represent part of a catastrophic human error which took place at the beginning of history, and that contrary to the notion that it has been around for tens of thousands of years, indigenous shamanism is more likely a transitional phase between the consciousness of hunter gatherers and the alienation of contemporary state religions.

## Lives as numb wage slaves

Faith healing comes in many costumes, and shamanism is one of them. We can wear skins or robes. We can beat drums or play pipe organs, burn sage or incense, sing to the element of water, or submerge ourselves in the river. Both the "laying on" of hands or sleight of hand can be efficacious. We can sing to our bear or sing to Jesus, whirl like a dervish, whip ourselves until we bleed, play with rattlesnakes, dance in the sun for four days, or starve ourselves in caves. Take your pick. Each can make less painful our lives as numb wage slaves.

If we can ignore that tiny voice crying for real freedom and calling us back to the circle, our economic and religious subservience will help us pretend to be something more than the imprisoned domestic animals we are.



A large problem remains. Shamanism, or any of the other religious choices as currently practiced, will not turn us from the global abyss. To believe shamanism and religion can bring about some form of planetary healing is much like the notion that more technology will solve our environmental problems. Transference, sexual abuse, misinterpretation of serious pathologies, and lack of ethics, all typical of the human potential movement, combine to further alienate and separate.

Benign attempts at healing by unskilled and uninformed devotees, while perhaps not causing serious harm, can impede solid, long-term movement toward better health. To put it plainly, shamanism draws some seriously crazy folks, and many leaders are happy to look the other way as long as the fees are paid.

### **Contemporary shamanism teaches vertical, hierarchical religion**

For those of us arrogant enough to assume we have mastered this reality enough to explore another, our shamanic practice should pull us toward radical anarchistic action. We've been hearing from, and paying huge workshop fees to shamanic leaders for decades about "connecting to spirit," but their message sidesteps industrial capitalism, the religions to which it is connected, and open, public, radical, changes flowing from our spiritual work. The reason for this omission is clear. Contemporary shamanism teaches vertical, hierarchical religion. The focus is on what Mircea Eliade, in *Shamanism, Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, described as the "journey," rather than presence in this biological world.

Agriculture, religion and government have not brought us a better life. The price we have paid for these abstractions is far too high. The amusing charm of a small transistor radio hanging from a tree in an upper Amazon village belies the toxicity of the poisonous little gadget.

Writings of Morris Berman, Paul Shepard, Joel Kovel, Stanley Diamond, John Zerzan, David Watson, Derrick Jensen, Lewis Mumford, and others have led me to conclude that we should not be attaching religious symbolism and meaning to shamanic experience, but instead should seek a practice which takes us to the awareness that preceded the alienating, beginning of agriculture and religion.

We should attempt a return to what Berman calls paradox, free of time and language. Even brief experiences of integration might help us build decentralized communities centered on our insight.

### **Return to "primitive wisdom"**

An intentional use of altered states can obliterate the duality that has led to the domination and destruction of our world, an experience of unity, what Sigmund Freud called the regressive "oceanic experience," what Jung called a progressive return to "primitive wisdom" and what Morris Berman, in *Wandering God*, termed the "paradox" of hunter-gatherer consciousness, "a diffuse or peripheral awareness," and in his earlier book *The Re-enchantment of the World*, called "participatory consciousness" in which "the sacred, such as it is, simply is the world."

Unfortunately, shamanic practice as taught imbeds us in pathological constructs. Linear, vertical thinking has brought us to disaster. If we leave religion behind, trance practice can lead us to an egalitarian culture of biological integration. We must reject the religious rituals and notions of upper and lower worlds. We must cease our efforts to ascend and return to living completely here, in ourselves, on this earth, as integrated beings.

The dominant power structures under which we exist are only too happy to have us live in the illusory and impotent condition of duality, and most humans will sit and do nothing during this time of inexorable unraveling. Only a few will work to recover our history as integrated, wild beings.

Our hunter-gatherer ancestors are still close. Wiser and healthier than we, they are calling us back from a technological and religious cliff. Small, egalitarian, tribal circles of paradox can return us to the awareness of our ancestors of 10,000 years ago, before they unwittingly brought us religion and planted the seeds of our destruction.

We can reject the linear, oppressive, hierarchical, and alienating forms of religions that have swept our world and begin to live in an archaic, anarchistic, sustained way that begins to heal our planetary home.

### **We must be done with leaders**

We need not travel to other realms. We must learn to step through a barrier and arrive here. Trance brings us home. School is in the garden, the forest, the prairies, the rivers. The

We can reject the linear, oppressive, hierarchical and alienating forms of religions that have swept our world, and begin to live in an archaic, anarchistic, sustained way that begins to heal our planetary home.

teaching we need will not come from priests, gurus, shamans, or scientists. Our circles must be egalitarian and built on a solid mistrust of all power.

We must be done with leaders and their overwhelming lusts for money, sex, and power, impulses so integral to our culture they routinely go unnoticed. We must find ways to explore our way home without the intervention of individuals and organizations that propose equality on the surface but simply duplicate the power and alienation they've learned in the academic and capitalistic culture.

A Taoist nun once said, "There is no practice." I think she was right, for those who have already merged with the living world around them. For the rest of us, if we sing, dance, eat our plant helpers, and there are spirits who care enough to help us return, they will. If we don't impose our notions of sacred, goodness, power, and importance on our visions, ourselves, and the other beings we encounter, we may be able finally to rest.

The rapture is not a naked ascent into heaven. It is a naked return through a diaphanous membrane to our wild, natural, biological home.





# Tarot Cards & the Left

How pronostications of doom encourage passivity rather than action

by Joshua Sperber

There is a near cottage industry of leftists penning engaging, sometimes lurid, always vivid, prognostications of impending social, political, economic, and ecological doom.

Websites like Counterpunch and Common Dreams, for instance, have been prophesizing for several years that a war on Iran is imminent due to the fact that, alternately, a US destroyer moves to the region (2006), oil prices rise (2007), an admiral retires (2008), or, the ubiquitous favorite, the Bush Administration is simply insane. Each one of these omens in-

dicates there will assuredly be war, maybe tomorrow.

These special capacities for clairvoyance are also applied to the domestic front, grimly and confidently warning in 2003 of an inevitable draft should the war on Iraq worsen. There are also similar predictions that not only is the economy collapsing, but that an unprecedented "tsunami of economic horrors, beyond the reach of every known metaphor, is upon us.

Did the stock market fall today? Vindication! Did it rise? Aha, the calm before the storm. It is not to deny the possibility of these calamities occurring, but rather to observe that their entertaining silliness reveals and obscures several important problems.

In his *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, Guy Debord, notes that, "Those who are always watching to see what happens next will never act: such must be the spectator's condition." These self-indulgent depictions of looming disaster, indeed, embody pure spectatorship, making individual agency or even counterargument irrelevant. Sit and watch as the tidal wave approaches. Isn't it beautiful/horrifying?

## Yet another false alarm?

These are expressions of a defeated left that knows not what to do and has no confidence in itself, so it has decided to watch and hope. Yet another false alarm? Don't worry; it will happen soon, they have to believe. It is noteworthy that these prophets do not care that they've harmed their credibility through so many years of false predictions; doomsday is their religion.

These predictions are dubious not because they are always wrong in particular, but because they are right in general. Like boys crying wolf, these warnings are correct that war and recession are inevitable. But they are inevitable not because an admiral retired or the price of oil went up. Rather, war will occur, though nobody (certainly not these fortunetellers, whose rate of accuracy makes football handicappers look like serious scientists) knows exactly when, because waging war is what states do.

War, as oft and correctly stated, is the health of the state. War is required to tear down obstacles to capital accumulation, open, create and protect markets, prime the economy, thwart rivals, concentrate political power, distract and disarm domestic criticism and rebellion, strengthen national ideologies and attack labor, among other things. The dogged attention on stopping the next war ignores that, so long as there are states and capitalism, war is inevitable.

Interestingly, the frequent characterization of the Bush Administration as crazy fulfills stated US propaganda aims. In a frequently quoted, but apparently forgotten 1998 paper, the Pentagon counseled that the US should try to portray itself as being not "fully rational and cool-headed." Rather, the Strategic Command advised, US foreign policy goals would be best achieved through the projection of an "irrational and

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Graphic: Tammy Wetzel. Five of Cups, part of the Divine Feminine Tarot Deck, a work in progress. The deck is all female and each card is a digital collage using her photography, as well as scanned objects.

Each card is representative of a stage, cycle or influence in women's lives. The door in the image is from a photo taken in the New Orleans French Quarter and the beach is on Cape Cod. See more at [tammywetzel.zenfolio.com](http://tammywetzel.zenfolio.com).



The current economic crisis may be another bump on capitalism's always dizzying terrain, or it may signal epochal changes

# The End of Money

by Daniel Pinchbeck

The crisis of the financial markets has taken on gargantuan proportions.

This spring saw the emergency sale of Bear Stearns, the fifth largest financial institution on Wall Street, to JP Morgan for a paltry sum by "Master of the Universe" standards, including

its flashy corporate headquarters and thousands of employees. Even this sale only came about because the US Federal Reserve agreed to cover the risks of exposure to creditors, pushing the financial costs onto US taxpayers. Despite this bailout and other interventions in the supposed "free market," the financial system is still reeling. Credit liquidity has disappeared, causing shockwaves in student loans and other areas.

With the increase in fuel prices and contracting supply of basic resources such as food and water, many commentators think far worse is still to come. Dmitry Orlov's *Reinventing Collapse* (New Society Press) argues that the United States is headed for an imminent economic meltdown that will be as devastating as the fall of the USSR in the 1990s: "Try to form a picture in your mind: it is a superpower, it is huge, it is powerful, and it is going to come crashing down," he writes. "You or me trying to do something about it would have the same effect as you or me wriggling our toes at a tsunami."

## "Life without money is unthinkable"

According to Orlov, an engineer and peak oil theorist, the causes of this crash include ideological gridlock, the entrenched corruption of our corporate state, the massive debt piled on by heedless US policies, and our utter dependence on a rapidly diminishing supply of fossil fuels. Predicting mass bankruptcy, hyperinflation, and resource shortages, Orlov recommends stockpiling items that can be bartered on the black market, such as razors, condoms, and liquor, strengthening local communities, and learning how to grow your own food. "For most people in the US, rich or poor, life without money is unthinkable," he notes. "They may want to give this problem some thought, ahead of time."

While the fire-sale of Bear Stearns was being arranged, I was at the Left Forum at Cooper Union in New York, an annual gathering of Leftist academics and organizers from around the world. The Left Forum featured over 100 panels on a range of subjects, from water privatization, CIA torture, to the leftward shift of South America, and many other topics. I had been invited to speak on a panel about indigenous cultures, consciousness, and social transformation – the only place at the Left Forum where social movements were even summarily discussed



—painting: M. Spira

in relation to indigenous cultures who live "with" the earth, and not "on" it, as my fellow panelist, Tiokasin, a radio host at WBAI and a Lakota, put it, and non-ordinary states of awareness were given a nod.

During a panel on the "Decline of the Dollar," I was struck by a comment from David Harvey – an *eminence grise* among Leftist academics, the esteemed author of *Limits to Capital* and other works – who noted that Wall Street bonuses in January amounted to an astounding \$36 billion, despite the heedless actions of the traders and investment houses that caused the implosion of the financial markets. At the same time, due to the subprime mortgage meltdown, over a million people have already seen their homes foreclosed, with nearly two million more foreclosures coming in the near-future, leading to more than three million US citizens deprived of their largest and most central asset. What Harvey noted is that, if we ignore the "fetishized mystical language" of the financial elite, "The loss of assets of those three million people is where those \$36 bil-

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# An Army of JACKS

TO FIGHT THE POWER

by Peter Lamborn Wilson

In fairy tales, humans can possess exterior souls, things magically containing or embodying individual life force—stone, egg, ring, bird or animal, etc. If the thing is destroyed, the human dies. But while the thing persists, the human enjoys a kind of immortality or at least invulnerability.

Money could be seen as such an exteriorized soul. Humans created it, in some sense, in order to hide their souls in things that could be locked away (in tower or cave) and hidden so their bodies would acquire magical invulnerability—wealth, health, the victoriousness of enjoyment, power over enemies—even over fate.

But these exterior souls need not be hidden away—they can be divided almost indefinitely and *circulated*, exchanged for desire, passed on to heirs like an immortal virus, or, rather like a dead thing that magically contains life and “begets” itself endlessly in usury. It constitutes humanity’s one really totally successful experiment in magic: no one calls the bluff and after 6000 years, it seems almost like Nature. (In fact, an old Chinese cosmogonic text claimed the two basic principles of the universe are Water and Money.)

It’s worth noting that in *marchen*, folk tales, the characters with external souls are often the villains. Clearly, the practice must appear uncanny to any normal society—in which magic (call it collective con-

sciousness in active mode) is channeled through ritual and custom to the life of all—not the aggrandizement of one against all (black magic or witchcraft). In the form of money, the exterior soul, shattered into fragments, so to speak, can be put into circulation but also stolen, monopolized guarded by dragons, so that some unlucky humans can be stripped of all soul, while others gorge or hoard up soul-bits of ancestors and victims in their ghoulish caves or “banks,” etc.

The beloved in the tales may also have an exterior soul. It falls into the grasp of the evil sorcerer or dragon and must be rescued. In other words, desire, which is alienated in the form of a symbolic object (reified, fetishized), can only be restored to its true fate (love) by re-appropriation from the expropriator, stealing it back from the wizard. The task falls to “Jack,” the third and youngest, sometimes an orphan or disinherited, possibly a fool, a peasant with more heart than any prince, generous, bold, and lucky.

Exactly the same story can be seen acted out in every honest ethnographic report on the introduction of money into some pre-monetary tribal economy. Even without the usual means of force, terror, oppression, colonialist imperialism or missionary zeal, money alone destroys every normal culture it touches.

## Cargo Cults and Ghost Dances

Interestingly, in nearly every case, some sort of messianic movement, Cargo Cult, or Ghost Dance type resistance movement springs up within a generation or two after first alien contact. These cults invariably make appeal to spirits (or even demons when circumstances really begin to deteriorate) for the power to overcome money, to “provide good things” without recourse to the black magic of money, the vampirization of other peoples’ external souls—the malignancy of wealth that is not shared.

This is a major trope in all the tales. Jack gives away part of his last loaf precisely to the power-animal or shaman or old lady with the very gift he’ll need in his quest, but he gives unwittingly, not in expectation of exchange. Jack always stands for what Polanyi and Mauss call the Economy of the Gift.

A great many fairy tales must have originated in “folk memories” of earlier non-hierarchical social structures, embodied in narrative (myth) and ritual, and given focus during the period when this ancient polity was threatened and finally overcome by later or alien systems—particularly by money, by the *coins* that always appear in these tales.

Proudhon believed that money had originally been invented by the People as a means to pry loose and force into circulation the hoarded



wealth of the “dragon,” the oppressor class. This idea has interesting resonances.

It points to the fact that for “the people,” money in hand represents not oppression but pleasure, gratified desire. Money may be the root of all evil, but given the existence of money, “love of money” is quite natural. Alchemy epitomizes this *jouissance* of money in the fairy-tale concept of transmutation, production of gold without labor as free gift of Nature to her lovers: Jove’s body as shower of golden coins.

As “the people” in person, Jack wins the treasure, but in doing so removes its curse, its dragonish malignancy, because in him the treasure finds its rightful end in happiness (i.e., free distribution, the Gift). Hence, the great feast that ends so many tales and the wedding between peasant lad and princess that levels distinctions and restores external souls to their bodies.

But Proudhon’s notion is contradicted by myth which attributes the invention of coins to a king—not Croesus of Lydia, who actually did invent coins (7th Century BC), but Midas, who choked on magical gold, his externalized soul. Dionysus and Silenus gave him his wish and then saved him by revoking it, allowing him to vomit all the gold into the river Pactolus in Phrygia.

The historical Midas lived in the 8th century BC, and Phrygia is not far from Lydia, where rivers also ran with gold and electrum and coins first appeared as temple tokens. Coins may seem to regain their innocence when they are spent rather than hoarded, but: in fact just at this moment they betray us by leaving us and never returning. In the end, all coins end up in the usurer’s vault. Money is already debt. It says so on the US \$1 bill, that encyclopedia of Hermetic imagery and secret doctrine of money.

### Jack never really wins

Jack’s triumph lies not in the “ever after,” but only in a moment that is forever remembered and invoked as lost. Obviously Jack never really wins, otherwise we wouldn’t call these stories fairy tales and relegate them to the nursery, the savage

pre-monetary world of mere childhood. The idea that *marchen* contain esoteric teachings on economics will probably sound ridiculous, but only to those who’ve never read them with Polanyi’s or Mauss’s economic anthropology in mind.

The old Russian cycle (Jack = Ivan) strikes me as particularly sensitive to this aspect of the material, almost as if socialism had a subconscious pre-echo in the great Russian fairy tale collections of the early 1900s.

Among the uniquely Slavic motifs of this cycle, everyone loves the tales of the Baba Yaga, the little house on great chicken legs that walks and moves wherever the wicked witch de-

The power to overcome money, to “provide good things” without recourse to the black magic of money, the vampirization of other peoples’ external souls—the malignancy of wealth that is not shared.



sires. The image’s power involves implications that Baba Yaga functions not only as the witch’s house, but also as external soul. It is both shield and weapon, space and motion, cave and magic carpet. I can’t help thinking of it as a symbol of Capital itself, especially in its purely magical end phase in the Global era. The Baba Yaga might be an offshore bank ready to pull up stakes and flee to some freer market or a shoe factory on its way to Mexico.

Speaking of Mexico reminds me of a story about the Mexican Revolution: Around 1910, thousands of North American anarchists, Wobblies, and adventurers crossed the border under false generic names to join Pancho Villa or the Magonistas and thus came to be called the “Army of Smiths.”

Given the proliferation and gigantism of Baba Yagas in our times, perhaps what we need is an Army of Jacks.

## Get Ready to Play! Call for submissions for next issue

Play as a concept has always animated the anarchist/underground milieu with an infectious spirit of playful experimentation and exuberance. Riding wild and playful energy, we created seeds of an insurrectionary alternative reality that could one day replace or overthrow the dominant system. Physical, political, ideological, and imaginal spaces seemed open to us.

Lately, however, we’re facing a considerably shrinking of the climate of possibility in North America due to a more conservative, defensive, and fearful cultural and political climate. We desperately need a renewed spirit of playful experimentation.

How do we make playful approaches more useful or essential when confronting the system or exploring alterna-

tives to it? How does the ethic, attitude, or practice of play inform, invigorate, animate, or deepen our politics? What separates serious play from mere frivolity? How can, and how do, anti-authoritarians everywhere tap into and thrive on the creative vitality of play?

In a spirit of experimentation, creativity, performance, spontaneity, transformation, exuberance, conviviality, and giddiness, we seek articles, accounts and artwork, fiction and non-fiction, on the theory and practice of play in all its forms, as well as similar work on general themes.

**Deadline: August 1**

**Send proposals to [fe@fifthestate.org](mailto:fe@fifthestate.org) or**

**Box 6, Liberty TN 37095 Publication date: October 1**





# Counterfeiting Sovereignty

by Don LaCoss

*Counterfeit coin is said to prove the existence of genuine — the terms being purely relative. But because there can be no counterfeit where there is no original, does it in any manner follow that any undemonstrated original exists? In seeing a spurious coin, we know it to be such by comparison with coins admitted to be genuine; but were no coin admitted to be genuine, how should we establish the counterfeit, and what right should we have to talk of counterfeits at all?*

—Edgar Allan Poe (1850)

**O**f all the symbols that clutter up our thinking on a daily basis, few are as deliriously supernatural as paper money. In literature, it's called "suspension of disbelief": the reader concedes to go along with a book's version of reality and accept some sets of imaginary aesthetic perspectives as legitimate markers for what's going on in exchange for the sensations of entertainment.

When the State prints up another batch of ugly, garishly-colored paper decorated with pictures of dead nationalist celebrities, we as subjects of that authority collectively suspend our disbelief and willingly comply to accept it as an abstract representation of condensed achieved work (yours or someone else's) and of the promise that the surrounding economic order will continue to acknowledge some value to that work in the payment of debt. The secret to a strong, stable, capitalist economy is to get everyone involved to come to an agreement about what version of social reality is represented by these poorly-designed rectangular pieces of colored cotton and linen.

The hallucinatory nature of bank notes sometimes crops up in the study of the philosophy of money. To capture its mirage-like qualities, theorists like Georg Simmel, Berthold Otto, and Elias Canetti sometimes dipped into the realms of human experience usually explored by the most fanciful theologians, cosmologists, or psychologists: money is best understood as in-

terpersonal communication, they suggest, or as human intention and desire, or as a mirror of modernity and identity. But it is clear that irrationality is a core component of money, and that all the high-tech inks, raised intaglio printing presses, and ultraviolet security threads used by the United States Bureau of Engraving and Printing to produce cash would be useless without consensual mass delusion and widespread magical thinking.

Marx diagnosed this magical thinking as a symptom of alienation, and he famously blamed money for the poisonously immoral abstraction and objectification of social relations. "My own power is only as great as the power of my money," he wrote in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844. "I am a detestable, dishonorable, unscrupulous, and stupid man, but since money is honored, then so is its possessor." Money has the "power to confuse and invert all human and natural qualities. It is the alienated power of humanity."

What Marx didn't follow up on, though, is that, for all its alienating qualities, money can also be used to fuse people together into a very tightly bound (and highly irrational) community, like the State. After all, it's no coincidence that one of the things that historians look at in study of ancient civilizations is when and how money was standardized by a central power. Uniform currency is as predictable an infrastructural management mechanism in a society as the standardization of weights and measures in commerce.

### Counterfeit nation

Stephen Mihm's *A Nation of Counterfeiters: Capitalists, Con Men, and the Making of the United States* (2007) offers a bit of insight here on the subject of currency, state authority, and counterfeiting. Between the end of the American Revolutionary War and the outbreak of the Civil War, hundreds of privately-owned chartered banks in over 30 states produced their



own versions of currency against gold reserves; Mihm guesses that there were about 10,000 different kinds of paper money floating around, making it extremely difficult for anyone to make distinctions between legitimate and counterfeit cash (or counterfeit banks, for that matter).



Most of those notes had an identifiable regional association—the “First Metropolitan Bank of Philadelphia,” let’s say—so that when you used them in purchasing goods and services, you reinforced local ties and helped to forge a discrete territorial identity. Because it was impossible to recognize the real thing with so many different banks producing their own in-house paper, counterfeit money was accepted (and in some cases, welcomed) in trade and commerce out of necessity.

In making merchants, bankers, and other debt-holders in the community knowingly complicit in making a counterfeit bill into “a generally accepted medium of exchange,” fake money was magically converted into real money. The epigraph at the top of this article by the horror writer Edgar Allen Poe was originally published during this chaotic age of wildcat banks, currency swindlers, and the ghostly appearance and disappearance of monetary value.

This all came to an end with the need for the federal government to assert its sovereignty over the rebel Confederate South during and after the Civil War. To aid in this mission, a single national currency was created that would subsume all local bank notes and regional economic activity to a more centralized body. The use of this national bank note as the one and only money was enforced; the Secret Service was invented in 1865 to suppress the production of competing currencies for the Department of the Treasury. This move sharply changed the way the market economy operated in the US and helped to stabilize the country in time for the coming burst of industrialization at the end of nineteenth century.

Although Mihm doesn’t spell it out this way, it’s clear from his history that currency is a con game, and counterfeit bills effectively challenge paper money to prove its worth. The only way that official currency can neutralize the challenge of counterfeits is to call upon the State’s monopoly on violence to criminalize and punish alternative currencies.

The exclusive use of state-issued money allows political authorities to insinuate themselves into daily person-to-person dealings at a remarkably intimate level. It gives the State a considerable degree of control over all kinds of social and cultural practices. Every piece of government-issued money in your pocket embroils you into a vast authoritarian network of national sovereignty mechanisms.

### Treason and war

National currency is undoubtedly a tool of State authority. It is a weapon of the State and it is a tool of state building—it’s no wonder that government bureaucrats want to jealously control its creation, circulation, and quantity. The government declares cash valuable and backs this up by forcing people to use it for all economic activity. In so doing, the sovereign power closely ties the fortunes of its subjects to its own stability; any attempts to

destabilize the legitimacy of government rule over individual lives will result in a loss of confidence in the economy, potentially impoverishing those living under its order.

Does this mean that counterfeiters are seditionists? Can making and passing counterfeit money be regarded as anti-statist subversion? The legal penalties are certainly harsh enough to suggest that counterfeiting is a minor form of treason: in US federal court, for example, there are separate felony penalties for making, possessing, passing, and concealing “forged and counterfeited obligations of the United States knowingly and with intent to defraud,” each charge carrying with it about fifteen years in prison and a fine of \$5,000. On top of that, every counterfeit bill passed is an additional \$250,000 penalty aside from the cost of restitution for whatever good or service that you purchased with your creation.

As with the draconian drug laws, property seizures by the government are common. Theoretically, if you make a \$10 bill in your bedroom with a computer, a flatbed scanner, a decent desktop image editing software program, and a good color printer, and then use that DIY sawbuck to put gas in your car, law enforcement agencies are able to seize your computer equipment, your home, and your car. On top of that, you’d be looking at 60 years in a federal prison, probably \$270,000 in fines, and you’d be forced to reimburse the gas station for the couple gallons that you bought with the \$10.



Congruent with notion that counterfeiting is a treasonous erosion of sovereignty is the position that state-sponsored funny money operations are considered acts of war. Overlooking the mass irrationality that’s needed to make money work in the first place, international law uses sound, sober economic reasoning for regarding counterfeiting as a legitimate *casus belli*.

Bogus currency increases the amount of cash circulating in the carefully-monitored money supply, and any unauthorized increase in the money supply devalues it, weakening its value.

This helps to explain why, starting in 2002, there were statements being made regularly by US government spokespersons about Saddam Hussein’s connections to a massive counterfeiting operation that was threatening the integrity of the US dollar. (As with Saddam’s sophisticated biological warfare and nuclear weapons program, evidence of his sinister international currency counterfeiting scheme was never found in Iraq.)

US executive branch fingers have also been pointing at the vile Stalinist ruling elite of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea as counterfeiters, but an extensive investigation by Interpol in 2006 and by the Swiss state police last summer failed to confirm any involvement whatsoever of Pyongyang in the manufacture of spurious US bank notes. As the Bush-Cheney regime tries to go out with a bang in January 2009, Iran has been singled out in recent months as the mastermind behind yet another economic warfare campaign based on counterfeit dough.

The frothy blather that’s been most promulgated by right-wing bloggers and the Pavlovian mainstream press has been about a suspected Syria-Hezbollah-Palestine Authority dollar factory supposedly run by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in

**SuperDollars - Real? Fake? The same**



the Beqaa valley in eastern Lebanon—expect more of the same stories as the propaganda mills begin churning out more nonsense for justifying airstrikes against Iran.

### The superdollar conspiracies

What these Axis of Evil counterfeiting conspiracy theories have in common is the creation and distribution of what US Treasury experts have taken to calling “superdollars.” The superdollar is almost indistinguishable from the real thing—what makes it “super” is the superior quality of the inks, etchings, and printing on these bills which exceed, by most accounts, the look and design of the cash minted by the US government.

These fakes are exquisitely advanced. Because of the artistry and technology that they entails, it can only be the work of a government rather than an organized crime syndicate. It’s been estimated that every one out of ten thousand US bills currently in circulation is a superdollar counterfeit. In the next few months, the Treasury Department will be releasing its “big-head” facelift of the \$100 note, a re-invention of the 2003 design that’s been largely motivated, by the advances in counterfeiting technology that has made the superdollar possible.

The panic over these counterfeits is existential. It is virtually impossible to distinguish between an “un-real” superdollar Benjamin and a “real” \$100 bill. It’s not that there’s a possibility that there might be some confusion between a worthless fake paper scrap and a valuable financial instrument that poses the most danger here; rather, the peril is that they are in reality both worth the same amount because they are so closely identical.

It takes the specialist skills of a forensic scientist from the Treasury Department to identify a superdollar by sight, so it is safe to assume that, for everyday transactions with one another in the street, it is an authentic, state-sanctioned bank note worth what the number in the corner of the bill says. The superdollar, then, is not an anti-\$100 bill, but a counter-\$100 bill that, for all intents and purposes, shares the identical qualities and functions of a C-note that has been issued by the US government.

When Interpol and the Swiss police failed to find any evidence of alleged North Korean involvement in the superdollar scheme, a business reporter for a conservative daily German national newspaper conducted his own investigation. Known for his expertise in the problems of government-run bank note printing industries, this German journalist concluded that the superdollars were likely the result of “an illegal parallel print of a genuine note,” meaning that someone is using the exact same presses, processes, ink, paper, and perhaps even printing facilities used exclusively by the US government.

Other reporters who have followed this story have theorized that the counterfeiters are connected with US intelligence services and are producing cash for clandestine use to elude any Congressional audit and budgetary oversight. The \$100 superdollar bills initially surface outside of the US in places where intelligence agencies are particularly active (the Middle East, East Africa, and Pacific Asia) before making their way to Europe and the US. What is especially peculiar is that—though these forgeries is astonishingly detailed to an almost microscopic level—the same unknown counterfeiters have failed to duplicate even the most basic magnetic and infrared security features. What this means is that the most common devices used by US banks can easily spot them as fake.

In other words, it’s as if the superdollar counterfeiters wanted to fool everyone except the US Federal Reserve banking system, thereby limiting the usefulness of these notes to cash-only transactions conducted on foreign soil. The superdollar counterfeiting gang has been thoughtful enough to fabricate bank notes that function exactly like US money does without tampering with the Fed’s carefully calculated money supply. The superdollar is a brilliant enough counterfeit to have all the power and prestige of US currency for conducting business (especially black market business) in the world’s hotspots, but isn’t good enough to affect the rate of monetary inflation, because the moment it enters into the US domestic money stream it is identified as a fraud and removed from circulation. It’s as if the counterfeiters were US patriots, or had some sort of vested interest in keeping the stability, strength, and integrity of US state sovereignty intact.

Gold bugs—true believers in bullion as the only “real” marker of wealth, like those angry and apocalyptically anxious white guys who mix old-school right-wing survivalism with the property fetishism of the pseudo-libertarian “Libertarian Party”—mockingly refer to folding money as “fiat currency,” inked paper devoid of any intrinsic, material worth outside of the government’s ability to coerce people to use it as a legal tender in the payment of taxes.

They’ve got a point, of course—all paper money is valueless so long as value is determined by government fiat. It’s easy to extrapolate this point about fiat money for anarchists. Just as there are no legitimate governments, there is no currency that isn’t counterfeit. If the suspicions about the origins and functions of superdollars turn out to be true, then there can be no better illustration of the delusions of money and the State that we all labor under.

### U.S. cash shows cocaine traces



A 1985 study by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration of the money machines in a U.S. Federal Reserve district bank, random samples of \$50 and \$100 bills revealed that a third to a half of all the currency tested bore traces of cocaine.

Moreover, the machines themselves were often found to test positive, meaning that subsequent batches of cash fed through them would also pick up cocaine residue. Evidence given before a federal appeals court in 1995 showed that three out of four bills randomly examined in Los Angeles bore drug traces.

A single bill used to snort cocaine or otherwise mingled with the drug can contaminate an entire cash drawer.

The average person need not fear that the money in their wallet will inadvertently get them high, or that paying for a burger and fries at McDonald’s will cause them to fail a random drug test. Only those whose jobs call upon them to handle extremely large numbers of bills every day need worry that enough cocaine is getting on their hands to be detectable. Bank tellers or those who work in the soft count rooms of casinos, for instance, might need to consider the effects of this contamination.

From: rollitup.org



*Counterfeit Currency: How To Really Make Money*, M. Thomas Collins, Loompanics Unlimited, 1990 (out-of-print)

Money is a fairly curious substance. Its official function is to represent value, but once said, you can immediately challenge all the assumptions inherent in such a formulation: Value; its representation? Since value itself is a representation of abstract worth, money operates within economies as a representation of a representation. No wonder its properties seem so inscrutable.

Unable to get a reasonable handle on what money is and how it functions gives rise to a host of whacky theories.

For instance, to a whole section of the right-wing, money has a totemic quality somehow bound up with the basis of American liberties which began to unravel with the passage of the Federal Reserve Act in 1913. To them, everything was fine in the U.S. up until when the Jewish bankers began to manipulate the currency. They desperately need history lessons.

Money, by its very nature, can only be successfully issued by a government, but once in circulation it seems to have a life of its own, uncontrolled by those who attempt administrative methods to affect its fluctuations.

The money nuts say the latter problem stems from currency no longer being tied to a gold standard or other precious metal. This concept fails to realize that granting gold (in reality, only a pretty rock) a particular value is no less an arbitrary assignment of worth than what they ascribe to unbacked currency. In fact, the whole concept of value is itself an abstraction dependent upon human assignation.

In any event, we know those funny pieces of paper are what make the capitalist world go 'round and that their possession translates into political domination and social power. Wars are fought, people's lives made miserable, all for these scraps with

Fifth Estate reprint, Fall 1991

## Isn't All Money Fake?

by E. B. Maple



pictures of dead politicians on them. We also know governments jealously guard their monopoly over the printing of money and few crimes are more assiduously pursued than counterfeiting.

The dreaded fear is that unauthorized printing of currency will erode the value of money and public confidence in it, concerns which are undoubtedly true. One startling assertion in *Counterfeit Currency* is that 20 percent of U.S. money is bogus, a dark secret kept from the population for the above reasons.

Collins' essay, though, is not a treatise on the perplexing qualities of money, but a how-

to manual, a precise, step-by-step guide to producing and circulating counterfeit money. It's hard to imagine a great number of people will actually put the book's techniques into practice, but it is consistent with Loompanic's other wild manuals on the commission of illegal acts such as how to build your own atom bomb and a series on how to kill.

Loompanic's publisher, Michael Hoy, fashions himself an anarchist of sorts, more of a free market, individualist than is palatable to anti-capitalist, communal types, but it is clear from books like this and others in his catalog that he has little respect for government and polite society.

Is it radical for anarchists to print and circulate bad money? Is it destructive of the state or just an innovative way to partake in the circulation of commodities? Is eroding public confidence in the currency good? Does counterfeiting beat work or is it simply another job? Are the high risks worth the effort?

These are questions for the reader to ponder. The book is interesting as an unabashed manual of criminality and for its blatant nose thumbing at the law, but much of the text is devoted to the details of counterfeiting and probably of interest solely to those planning a career shift or desiring an income supplement.

**fifthestate** reprint, Summer 1991

## Wealth and Poverty: In the Shadow of an Exclusive Club

Expensive new cars—Lincolns, Cadillacs, Mercedes, Jaguars—arrive at the entrance to the Detroit Athletic Club (DAC). Rich, white men dressed in \$750 suits, \$200 wing-tip shoes, custom tailored shirts, sporting \$2,000 Rolex watches are greeted brightly but obsequiously by uniformed black attendants.

Members of Detroit's exclusive men's club stride up the walk bordered by an immaculate lawn and intricate floral patterns leading to the building's entrance. Each of them displays the arrogance and bursting self-confidence wealth and privilege bestow upon the rich and powerful.

Inside, ostensibly the purpose is sports and health, but on the squash and handball courts, in the steam baths, on the massage tables, deals are cut, partnerships are made and broken, politicians bought and sold, economic decisions affecting an entire city or even a distant nation are decided upon. The old, elegant, cut-stone building, with its crystal chandeliers, leather furniture and deep pile rugs, is the venue for the men who constitute the city's ruling class to gather.

### Inside The Barclay Apartments

A scant three blocks away is a building which once exhibited a similar elegance in

*Continued on Next Page*



# Wealth & Poverty

Continued from Previous Page

the era when the DAC was constructed.

It is now one of only three remaining structures on the block, the others having long ago met their demise beneath the wrecking ball. Inside the Barclay Apartments, the first floor windows are boarded, the plumbing is broken, and the gas was turned off two years ago.

In a third-story room, where Detroit's bourgeoisie once supped, three young African Americans are arguing over possession of a rock of crack cocaine. As the dispute gets more heated, one of the men reaches behind his back for the .25 caliber automatic stuck in his belt which presses cold against his skin. The cops will be here soon.

All three will test positive for the HIV virus, but none knows it at the moment.

The one woman present is pregnant and her baby will be part of a statistic of infant mortality identical to those of who live in the slums of Mexico City's hillside squatter villages. The men have less of a chance of reaching 40 years of age than do their counterparts in Bangladesh.

Rarely do those at the Barclay Apartments or the DAC think about the connection between each other's social class, but each, in their poverty and in their wealth, create the other.

## The Rich Eat The Poor

The rich and the poor, workers and owners, represent a profile of the American empire: a pyramid-shaped maldistribution of wealth based on the industrial plunder of the planet. The richest 10% of Americans own 83% of all personal wealth, while the rest of us share the remaining 17%.

The richest one-half percent of the population, the sector which personifies the ruling class, owns close to 50 percent of all privately held wealth, and it is this concentration which translates into political and social power. The life of opulence and leisure the rich lead, combined with their command position in the economy and politics, comes as a direct result of a



Anarchists picketing the posh downtown Detroit Athletic Club, June 1991. A few blocks away, grinding poverty exists today although most of the buildings described in the article have been cleared for condos. —photo: Mike

system of looting. All they possess and control is at the expense of billions of workers and poor, both here and in the Third World.

The rich maintain a state of permanent class war against the poor. They are willing to kill to protect their wealth and privilege as they've done in Vietnam, Central America and most recently in the Middle East. Our vision of a free, ecologically sound world will never come to pass if we allow these planet-wreckers to continue in power. To them, we are nothing but dog meat for their industry and businesses, and cannonfodder for their wars.

We want to wipe the smug smiles off the faces of this selfish, swinish elite by challenging and destroying the rule of money and power. Our efforts for now may be small and isolated, but we intend to have them grow until the earth is free of this class of parasites.

One day, we will surely EAT THE RICH!

—Val Salvo

## Subtext, Subversion and Sabotage

### Call for submissions for Winter 2009 FE

This winter, the Fifth Estate seeks to publish good reading for winter hibernation. Work that focuses on underground political, cultural, and social activity, as well as subtextual analysis. We seek discussion on how radicals and everyday people subvert the dominant culture in a meaningful way. We seek analysis on the unspoken meanings of current social, economic, semiotic, and political phenomena such as entertainment, gender, institutionalized violence, the environmental crisis, the Green Scare, bio-ethical decisions or anything you can fit into the theme. We seek to examine the parts we play in subjection and subjugation. This winter we seek to exhume the churchyard and provide readers with an invisible choir that will sing audibly and precisely about the true meanings of things.

Send proposals to [fe@fifthestate.org](mailto:fe@fifthestate.org) or Fifth Estate, PO Box 202016, Ferndale MI 48220,

Deadline for submissions: November 1

Publication date: January 15, 2009



# Down and Out in Athens

Excerpt from *Nike*

by Cara Hoffman

I sat and smoked and counted my money. When this carton's empty, I thought, I will have saved fifteen dollars. Maybe I could go to the islands before I have to start smoking Navys. I couldn't afford to keep smoking. I had to save. The waves of nausea came and went. I wanted them to settle so I could get up and start moving again. I had to get going, and my stomach was slowing me down. The lack of money was impressive considering how much I had managed to spend just doing nothing. And how much I'd made selling my original passport.

I remembered that day at the consulate. The day I got a new one issued. I was the last of the three of us to do it.

It had been a worthwhile hassle, and made us fifteen hundred dollars. I'd filled out the paperwork, but I'd no other identification.

Z5530900, I wrote down, sitting at a little desk to the right of the window in the marble and tile hall of the American consulate. That had been my passport number. Then Name: Brennan, Maya Kathleen. Sex: I got an 'F' in that category. Birthplace: NY, USA. Birth date: 2/10/73. Nationality: "You put 'drunkard' down for that one right?!"

I slid the form and the square photo booth picture of my face beneath the glass that separated me from the bald, suited official. He took it, went away, and then came back with questions.

Where did I go to school?

Where had I been staying?

How much money did I have?

Who were my parents?

Where were they?

I looked bad—did I need some clothes or lunch maybe?

No?

Name of the hotel again?

I'd been traveling for how long?

Sure I wasn't working here? Begging here?

Did I know the same drug laws were enforced in Greece as in the U.S.? Strict-er, in fact?

No money? No passport? No return ticket? No ID?

No. Passport. I'd have to wait in this room...I'd have to be interviewed by...

I live with my brother, I told him. He's Airborne Special Forces, retired. He goes to Cornell University on the GI bill. I watched his face relax as he recast me in his mind. I'll be going home at the end of the summer, I said, standing straight

and looking into his face. He's seen to it.

He set the forms down and looked at me. Roughing

it, eh? I smiled.

Y e a h .

Roughing it.

Trust. . .amused will to assist. I watched myself in his face, move fluidly from a desperate loser with suspect motivations, to "cute." To "spunky tomboy." Watched myself move from a check list of details in a consulate training film called "How to identify a drug trafficker," to a cameo role in a film about an orphan in which Shirley Temple salutes.

The reverence on his face was hilarious. I had to pause with my lines—it looked like we might have to take a curtain call right there, so genius was his comic parody. That solemn understanding he had with himself. The will to support a good

kid down on her luck. I mean, after all I was American. We were American.

He'd support my God given right to a passport, for the U.S.A., and for the sacrifices my brother'd made. My brother Sergeant-First-Class-Special-Forces-Airborne. It took eight seconds. And another half an hour to get the document.

Okay, Maya, you're all set.

Thank you for squaring me away, sir.

He smiled at that. It's issued for a year—get your brother to send us a copy of your birth certificate and we can extend it for you right away for ten—or you can just take care of it when you get home.

I sure will, sir. Thank you, now.

And I was Maya Brennan again, a few years older in the new photograph. And it might have all been fine if we'd have stopped there.

## NIKE

Set in the red light district of Athens, Greece in the late 1980s, Cara Hoffman's cult classic novel, *NIKE*, is about getting by at the periphery. It chronicles the lives of a group of young expatriates from a global culture of war.

In this scene Maya Brennan, who has been raised on military bases throughout the US, and has sold her passport to finance her travels, uses the cultural capital of her upbringing to get the document reissued. *NIKE* reveals a world where freelance military contractors, small-time traffickers, and refugees from the superficial materialism of the Reagan/Bush era surf undetected on the crest of a wave that was about to break in an era of perpetual military engagement.

*NIKE* and Hoffman's short story collection, *The Wedding*, are available from Small Press Distribution, [www.spd.org](http://www.spd.org).





# The End of Money

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lion of bonuses came from.”

Apparently, another 8 million-plus homes—more than 10 percent of the homes owned in the US—are now valued at less than the outstanding mortgages owed. What this means is that many of those mortgage-holders may soon find it more sensible to walk away from their property – sending their keys back to the mortgage-issuers as “jingle mail” – rather than continue to cover their exorbitant debt. As a chain-reaction, this will

increase the devaluation of US property.

At the same time, the next phase of the current economic crisis will extend to other forms of personal debt, such as credit cards. While the US and European Central Banks continue to pour hundreds of billions of dollars into the financial institutions that created this disaster through predatory lending practices, they have done little for the millions of poorer people facing insolvency.

As another Leftist economist noted on the same panel, one can only feel “a sense of awe” at the lack of real protest about what is taking place.

In 2006, I published my second book, *2012: The Return of Quetzalcoatl*, which studied the prophecies of indigenous people indicating we are in a time of massive transformation – the transition from the “Fourth World” to the “Fifth World” according to the Hopi. Based on my book, I often find myself looking over my shoulder, wondering if current events fit the prophetic

timetable of the Mayan Calendar. Although the validity of Carl Johan Calleman’s scholarship has been called into question by John Major Jenkins and others, it is interesting that Calleman predicted the current year (November 2007 – November 2008) to be the year of Tezcatlipoca – sinister deity of black magic and the jaguar – marked by economic collapse, war, and other threats.

On the one hand, I found many reasons for taking “2012” seriously as a threshold of some type of tremendous transition in human culture and consciousness, based on my research, my own synchronicities as well as esoteric and intuitive experiences. On the other hand, studies of the current state of global society insist that massive and accelerating change is unavoidable in all areas of life. The future of humanity is imperiled if we do not transform our social practices and fundamental paradigm within the next years.

Such a hypothesis is reinforced by many recent developments, from the sudden disappearance of honeybees and Chinook salmon to the comment made by a famous financier to a friend, later recounted to me, that currency will have no value in a few years, and the only thing that will be worth anything will be land. One of the depressing aspects of the Left Forum, along with the average age of the audience being well above fifty, was the palpable ambience of failure and defeatism in the crowd. Certainly, the last thirty-five years have been a miserable period for radicals in the US, who have watched the oligarchy consolidate power, instituting elements of a police state, and holding tight control of the mass media.

Crucial ideas and possibilities can vanish completely for a time – even for an entire generation – before they return with a new force and impetus, to start a new turn on the spiral. This has been the case with shamanic exploration of non-ordinary consciousness, which has made a resurgence in recent years in a wiser and more mature form than in the 1960s. Similarly, it is possible that the moment has arrived when a populist radical movement could reconstitute itself, and this could happen at a rapid pace. Radical movements often burst forth when theorists, sociologists, and academics least expect it. They arise when masses of fed-up people begin to seek direct redress against a system that has exploited and enslaved them.

That our financial system is fixed to reward a miniscule subset of the global population, the “ruling elite” who control the financial sector, is a realization that could begin to permeate the mass consciousness. Social awareness can only increase as the destructive delusions of the dominant ideology become more obvious. With the intermeshed networks of contemporary life, a new realization could spread rapidly, along with techniques to confront a system that has failed to protect the poor and the planet. The incredible mismanagement of the earth’s precious resources – the squandering of oceans, forests, animals, and air – is an indictment against the current order and its leaders. The continuity of this system is a direct threat to future generations. Although it seems unstoppable and unassailable, this system is also quite frail, utterly dependent on petroleum, on the effectiveness of constant media indoctrination, and on increasingly complicated technologies.

While most mainstream commentators and even some of the critics at the Left Forum argue that the current implosion of the financial markets is one of the periodic crises of capitalism that eventually gets resolved through institutional measures and bailouts, it actually may be far more than that. This may be neither a crisis of “liquidity” nor even one of insolvency, but a crisis of money itself – in other words, a crisis of faith in the entire belief system of capitalism, which has functioned as a displacement of religion, with money substituting for the banished god. As Karl Marx noted in his 1844 Manuscripts,



We are in a time of massive transformation – the transition from the “Fourth World” to the “Fifth World,” according to the Hopi.



money is "the visible divinity" in a capitalist world:

"By possessing the *property* of buying everything, by possessing the property of appropriating all objects, *money* is thus the *object* of eminent possession. The universality of its *property* is the omnipotence of its being. It therefore functions as almighty being. Money is the *pimp* between man's need and the object, between his life and his means of life. But *that which* mediates my life *for me*, also mediates the existence of other people for me. For me it is the *other* person."

When I reread some of Marx last year, for the first time since school, I was startled to encounter the tremendous depth of spiritual insight in his work. The radical essence of his thought has been obscured by the course of history, and by the desire to deny, suppress, and evade it, ever since.

Marx saw that the revolutions of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century enshrined the rights of the bourgeois individual to compete against others, rather than realizing man as a "species-being" who can only attain freedom through his communion with other men: "None of these so-called rights of man goes beyond the egoistic man, beyond man as a member of civil society, as man separated from life in the community and withdrawn into himself, into his private interest and his private arbitrary will. They see, rather, the life of the species itself, society, as a frame external to individuals, as a limitation of their original independence," he wrote in "The Jewish Question." Freedom was defined negatively, creating a social reality in which each individual had to struggle against others to preserve and increase their private domain.

As David Korten, Bernard Letaier, and others have written recently, our basic financial system in itself creates artificial scarcity, and induces competition and sociopathic behavior patterns that lead inexorably to disregard of the environment and mistreatment of others. When a bank gives out a loan to someone, they are not creating the extra money that the individual has to make as interest accrues. When they examine that person's credit, they are checking to see if that person has the capacity to compete effectively in the marketplace and come up with the accrued interest, which is imaginary capital at the outset. The individual then struggles against others to retrieve the money he owes. Similarly, publicly traded corporations must maximize profits to satisfy shareholders, and this forces an institutional disregard for environmental safeguards and humane practices.

Over the last decade, the deregulation of the financial system "acted like psychotropic drugs on the minds of investors," as one Left Forum panelist noted, unleashing increasingly rapacious and mindless greed. Pushed to its limit, the logic of the system reveals itself in transparent form. The subprime mortgage market offered loans to people with little or nothing in the way of assets or collateral that began at a low rate of interest and then ballooned to massive rates later. These predatory loans were then bundled together and sold as securities, given class "AAA" status by regulatory bodies that had little inter-

est in compelling restraint. These securities based on corrupted loans were meshed with other types of assets and securities and sold up the financial pyramid. As in the classic pyramid scheme, when the debtors at the bottom start to default, the rotten edifice comes tumbling down.

At the same time, the crumbling of this scam is revealing



—Richard Metz, No Kill, woodcut, 2006

Considering the extent of delusional capital now underlying the financial system, it is possible that the current crisis could be pointing toward the end of the current economic paradigm.

deep levels of tulip-style mania in the banks and financial institutions, which had developed highly convoluted mechanisms for extracting profits by lending vast, and nonexistent, sums to each other for short-term periods. While commentators think that the amount of actual wealth that is going to disappear from the world economy is \$1.5 - \$2 trillion, the amount of imaginary capital traded in rapid fashion to amp up artificial profits was exponentially higher than this number. At a time when credit has evaporated, whoever gets caught holding the i.o.u.'s for these massive amounts faces instant insolvency.

It appears that unleashed greed incited by deregulation of the markets has led to a massive implosion of the financial apparatus that may not be fixable within the current system. This crisis may have its roots in the early 1970s, when the US took the dollar off the gold standard, and the untethered US dollar became the global reserve currency, forcing the developing world to adopt it for international transactions and debt repayment. The building of the World Trade Centers could be seen as symbolizing the shift of the focus of the US economy from productive industry to finance capitalism, as the parasitical system of speculation on derivatives and currencies became the central wealth-producing engine within the US. The lack of US productivity coupled with a virtualized currency with no real-world referent has led to the amassing of extraordinary debt, on an individual and societal level.

The crisis may actually have far deeper roots, going back to the basis of capitalism itself, an economic system that constantly requires new markets to penetrate and cannot sustain itself without continually extending its reach. In a fully globalized world, where there are no new markets to reach or new

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# The End of Money

*Continued from Previous Page*

resources to exploit, capitalism may have reached its natural limit. It is also imprecise to call the current system "capitalist" in a classical sense, as it is actually one where massive subsidies protect vested interests, from agricultural lobbies to oil companies, and the ideal of a "free market" is a convenient fiction.

In a fully globalized world, the Neoliberal model can only perpetuate itself through the types of shock effects described by Naomi Klein in *The Shock Doctrine*, where destruction is encouraged and then seized upon as an opportunity to redevelop and recolonize areas already within empire. One of the panelists at the Left Forum described the mortgage meltdown as a "financial Katrina" that will allow wealthy speculators to take over urban neighborhoods where poor people have suffered mass defaults. The disastrous consequences of rampant privatization are increasingly obvious, as services become weaker, corruption increases, and prices rise.

## End of the current economic paradigm

Considering the extent of delusional capital now underlying the financial system, it is possible that the current crisis could be pointing toward the end of the current economic paradigm. This could mean a real trans-valuation of our world. As Marx points out, the function of money was to transform all qualities to quantities that are ultimately equivalent. Money "is the true agent of separation as well as the true binding agent – the [universal] galvanic-chemical power of society," Marx writes in *The 1844 Manuscripts*. Money-as-mediator and ultimate arbiter seeks to reduce all qualities to quantities, but fails because it reduces everything to sameness, with the Midas touch of nihilism. Love and trust are basic values that elude the mediation of money.

In his great book *The Gift*, Lewis Hyde contrasts our modern market economy with the gift-based economies of tribal

and indigenous cultures. He writes, "The desire to consume is a kind of lust. We long to have the world flow through us like air or food. We are thirsty and hungry for something that can only be carried inside bodies. But consumer goods merely bait this lust, they do not satisfy it. The consumer of commodities is invited to a meal without passion, a consumption that leads to neither satiation nor fire." The gift, on the other hand, renews the communal bond, and requires reciprocity as well as trust. Hyde writes:

The gift moves toward the empty place. As it turns in its circle it turns toward him who has been empty-handed the longest, and if someone appears elsewhere whose need is greater it leaves its old channel and moves toward him. Our generosity may leave us empty, but our emptiness then pulls gently at the whole until the thing in motion returns to replenish us."

If modern society reduces all value to a universal exchange of quantities, indigenous cultures were conscious of qualities that did not allow for perfect equivalences of exchange. Ultimately, it was the state of mind and heart of the giver that mattered, not the objectified value of an object.

The current economic crisis may be resolved – at least temporarily – by an international agreement between oligarchic forces that will lead to some bail outs and a renegotiation, and severe reduction, of American power in the world. Or it may be that the glue that has held together the international monetary order is coming undone, in which case a deeper process of transformation may take place.

If this is the case, then the social agreement that is money itself may be up for discussion, and the nature of value may change yet again. In other words, the current economic crisis may represent, not just a reordering of power and finance in the world, but a deeper expression of a crisis of value, and the opportunity to begin the pendulum swing back again, from an economy based on the meaningless exchange of nihilistic quantities to a different model of economy that would require alternative institutions and techniques to support the socially cohesive expression of values-based qualities.



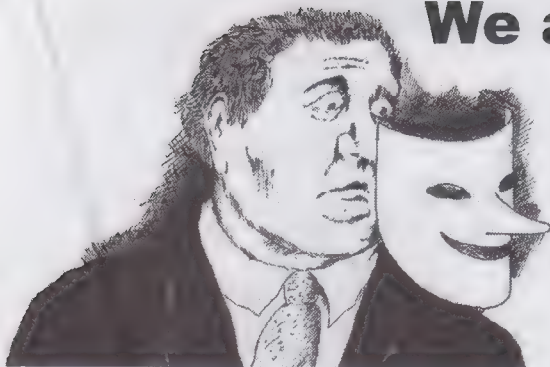
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**Each Fifth Estate has a theme, so very little in our back issues are out of date. Like every publication, hundreds of copies are left over when the next edition appears. It breaks our hearts to think these will be recycled into a bin rather than into readers' hands.**

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# We are all slaves of capital

Excerpt from *The Wandering of Humanity*

This fragment is from Jacques Camatte's pamphlet translated in 1975 in Detroit by Fredy Perlman. It was a key text in developing Fifth Estate concepts during the 1970s and 80s, ones which remain today. It speaks of capital and technology that has "run away" from its initiators and domesticated humans. It is available at [blackandred.org](http://blackandred.org)

isolated, are never an obstacle to capital, can easily be surrounded by capital, and are no more than deviations in relation to its norm (deviations which make that norm visible for what it is).

Nor can the goal be reached by the cultivation of one's individual being, in which one would finally find the real human being. In reality, these approaches should be connected. Perceiving oneself as a human being unshackled by any attributes already removes the dog collar imposed by class society. The desire for community is absolutely necessary. The reaffirmation of individuality (especially in its temporal aspect) is a rejection of domestication.

But this is inadequate even as a first element of rebellion; the human being is an individuality and a *Gemeinwesen* (part of a community). The reduction of the human being to his present inexpressive state could take place only because of the removal of *Gemeinwesen*—of the possibility for each individual to absorb the universal, to embrace the entirety of human relations within the entirety of time. The varied religions, philosophies and theories are mere substitutes for this essential component of human being. Since communism is the death of sameness, of repetition, human beings will emerge in all their diversity; *Gemeinwesen* will be affirmed by each. This implies that as of now we reject the despotism of a religion, a philosophy, a theory.

**W**e are all slaves of capital. Liberation begins with the refusal to perceive oneself in terms of the categories of capital, namely as proletarian, as member of the new middle class, as capitalist, etc. Thus, we also stop perceiving the other, in his movement toward liberation, in terms of those same categories.

At this point, the movement of recognition of human beings can begin. This is obviously only the beginning of the liberation movement, and is continually threatened with failure. Refusing to take this into account denies the power of capital.

What has to be perceived is a dynamic. We are slaves; our goal is not to become masters, even without slaves, but to abolish the entire dialectic of master and slave. This goal cannot be realized by the establishment of communities which, always

## Strike!

Strike!

In the spirit of Eugene V. Debs,  
an American Beowulf, who was like both a

sacred covenant rainbow  
for all the blue proletariat  
and a  
powerful electromagnetic storm  
and struck fiercely against the  
industrial money monsters who  
were mute, blind, stark and cold  
to all colors of tears and as  
brutal, bloodthirsty and beastly  
as the Anglo-Saxon monster Grendel!

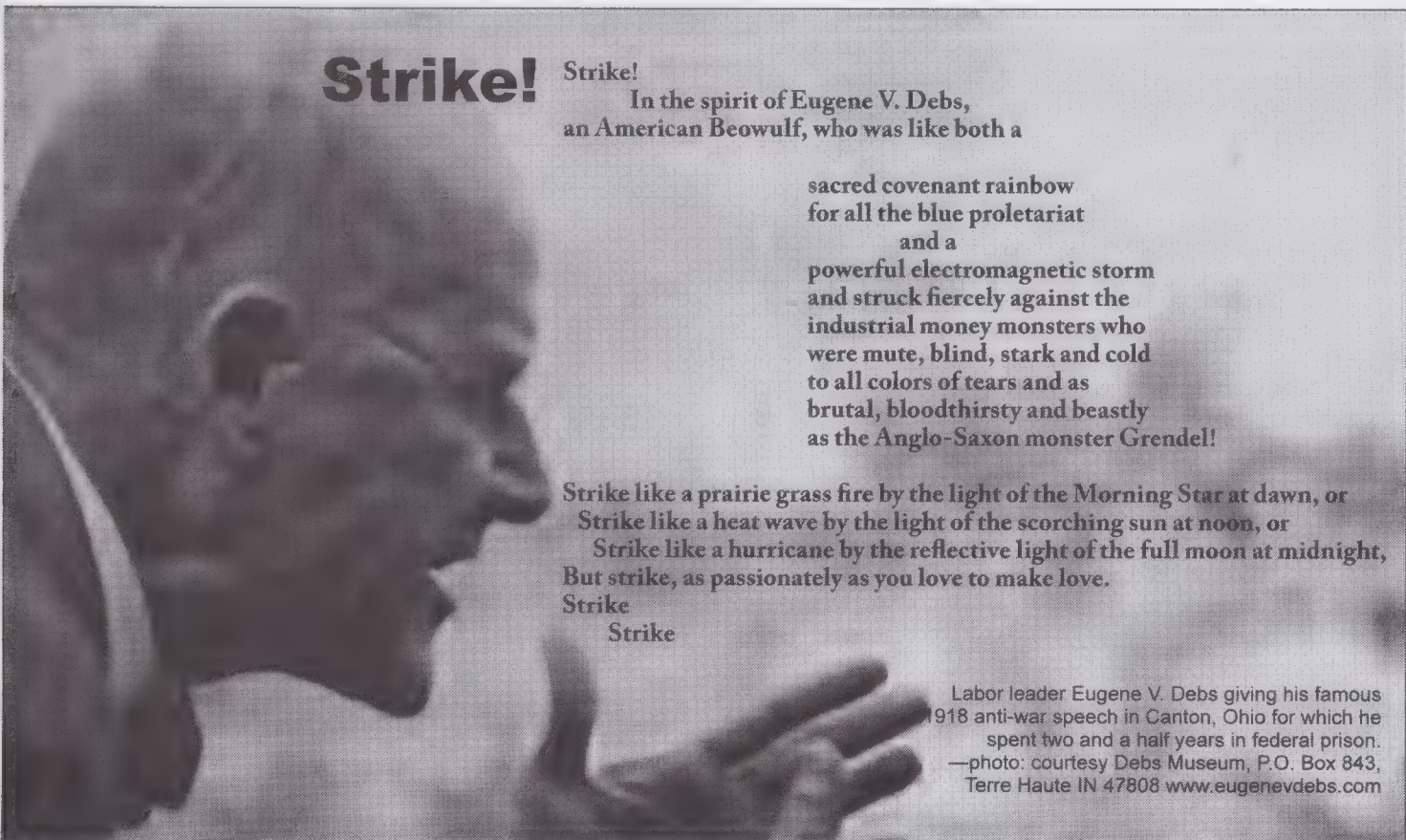
Strike like a prairie grass fire by the light of the Morning Star at dawn, or  
Strike like a heat wave by the light of the scorching sun at noon, or

Strike like a hurricane by the reflective light of the full moon at midnight,  
But strike, as passionately as you love to make love.

Strike

Strike

Labor leader Eugene V. Debs giving his famous  
1918 anti-war speech in Canton, Ohio for which he  
spent two and a half years in federal prison.  
—photo: courtesy Debs Museum, P.O. Box 843,  
Terre Haute IN 47808 [www.eugenevdebs.com](http://www.eugenevdebs.com)





Will the collapse of  
government rule in  
countries like  
The Gambia lead to

## The African Road to Anarchism?

A village dinner of fresh milk and lentils

by Jim Feast

My experiences on a recent trip to The Gambia on Africa's west-central coast, brought to mind the historic leftist dream that the state will wither away once workers have overturned capitalism.

Here's an irony of history. In the last 15 years, in the industrially undeveloped world, the state *has* withered away, not because of its supersession, but due to the extension of global capitalism. Talk of state collapse on capital's periphery doesn't mean governments have completely vanished, but that many states have deminished from being the totalized agencies of control we experience in Northern tier countries.

Following my February journey to what is officially titled The Republic of The Gambia, Africa's smallest nation, the counterintuitive idea occurred to me that (relative) state collapse may well presage an anti-authoritarian twist to the future of peripheral nations.

For reasons of comparison, let's contrast the recent history of South America and sub-Saharan Africa. Most nations in these regions have long been locked in relationships of unequal exchange with the industrialized world, selling raw materials cheaply and buying back manufactured items at jacked-up rates, meanwhile running up a debt burden both on these imports and to finance mostly corrupt government programs. The one obvious way for these nations to escape dependency was to siphon money from the raw materials sector to jump-start heavy industry, protected behind tariff walls.

Although this was only successful in a few states, the imposition of structural adjustment in the 1980s demanded by the World Bank and the IMF to satisfy outstanding loans, ended its strategic use. The creditor Western banking institutions (in return for continued loans), made the nations under their

direction scuttle industrialization programs in favor of renewed emphasis on raw material extraction, plus unbrick tariff walls to ease the entry of Western imports.

The social consequences were enormous. Shuttering of factories meant the massive lay off of workers as did the downsizing of the government. The dispossessed entered the ballooning urban informal sector, joined by peasants who the new emphasis on capitalist (that is, capital intensive) agriculture had made redundant.

Mike Davis in *Planet of Slums* argues that these nations, locked into runaway urbanization and impoverishment, have little hope of escaping their downward course. Those who occupy the command centers can handily hold onto wealth and power because the mass of poor are too steeped in the day-to-day battle for survival to organize coherent resistance.

By contrast, the authors of the anthology, *Another Production Is Possible: Beyond the Capitalist Canon*, edited

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Women pounding millet in Gambian Fula village.  
—all photos: Nhi Chung





"The Shoplifter"—Stephen Goodfellow. [www.goodfellowweb.com](http://www.goodfellowweb.com)

# Shoplifting

## and the Politics of Instant Gratification

**L**ots of anarchists and other radicals shoplift on a regular basis. But the public discussion on the topic seems to oscillate between celebration and denunciation, with almost nothing in between.

On one side you've got CrimethInc and Yomango saying shoplifting is authentic resistance. As an anonymous author wrote in CrimethInc's *Days of War, Nights of Love*, shoplifting is "the most effective protest" against the worst features of modern capitalism "because it is not merely theoretical—it is practical, it involves action." Yomango is a European shoplifting community founded in Spain in 2002, whose name in Spanish translates to, "I steal."

On the other side, critics denounce these views as the voice of white middle-class entitlement. Butch Lee, in a fire-spitting review of CrimethInc's book published at [kersplebedeb.com](http://kersplebedeb.com), wrote that "only superprivileged people talk this phony way, folks sitting on top of the rest of the human race, but playing at being someone else."

The moral tenor of these arguments is a problem because it stifles any further thought into the matter. There are exceptions, especially works like Abbie Hoffman's *Steal This Book*, the zines of Iggy Scam, and Nigel Davis's *Evasion*, which focus on the how-to or the adventure of stealing. But even these leave me wondering just what role shoplifting plays in the lives of ordinary radicals who

do it regularly, year after year. So I raised the question in my circle of friends and scattered email messages to the digital winds, requesting contact with anyone who was both a political activist and a thief.

The first thing I noticed was how few of the shoplifters who answered believed they were hurting capitalism by slipping cans of cat food or vegan meats into their backpacks at the chain store of their choice. I expected a response more in line with the Crimethinc/Yomango position. But the politically minded thieves of today seem to conceive of their activity in more humble terms.

### It's a way to procure resources for the local Food Not Bombs

For the most part, it's a way to procure food to eat, clothes to wear, and resources for the local infoshop or Food Not Bombs chapter. They might take a devilish joy in stealing beyond their means, snagging an overpriced studded belt from a super-hip Hot Topic store or a box of organic berries from Whole Foods, but, in general, they don't believe that stealing changes the world or emancipates its people.

Why do they keep doing it, then, even when they attain something close to middle-class status? M., a labor organizer and graduate student who spoke under the condition of anonymity, wasn't sure himself. He certainly doesn't believe he's effectively attacking the corporations he steals from.

"I've stolen more than anyone I know," he said. "I've probably stolen more than \$10,000 worth of food in the past five years, most of it from Key Foods, and I don't think I've put a dent in their profits."

Nor does M. need to shoplift to survive. He owns his apartment and is "by no means working class." He criticizes the arguments that justify stealing, which he says emerge from an "everything-should-be-free sort of entitlement attitude." And, he distinguishes shoplifting from proper civil disobedience, which is "taking credit for doing something wrong," while theft "doesn't call attention to the problem. You're just circumventing that for your own benefit."

If M. is against stealing on every rational level, why does he continue to do it? Maybe it has to do with the rush, he says, or with his indignation at how expensive things are, or with habits that date back to his years in radical environmentalist groups, where he

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# African Road to Anarchism?

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by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, see examples of the poor fighting back. For these thinkers, the poor, realizing the new world order has no place for them, often opt to jettison capitalist economic structures or ignore their legal strictures.

The former route is represented by the creation of a solidarity economy comprised of worker owned and managed cooperatives, which now form a portion of many South American economies. These formations, in the words of *Another Production* contributors, strive to "replace the autocracy that characterizes capitalist production. . .with participatory democracy within production units. The goal is to expand the field of action of democracy from the political to the economic field."

**I**gnoring legal strictures is typified by the Movement of Landless Workers in Brazil, active since the late 1980s. Comprised of "lumpen peasantry,"—dispossessed, floating farm laborers—the group has seized unused *latifundi*, holding and farming them until the government legalizes the take-over. The movement's most dramatic action occurred in April 1996 when 15,000 people (!) invaded and occupied farmlands in Paraná province, which they hold to this day.

If we compare South America to Africa in terms of their likelihood of leading the charge to replace global capital, it would have to be said that in South America the poor have been better able to fight off state repression with their more vigorous labor and peasant organizations. Yet Africa, as we will see, seems in some ways better predisposed to turn the collapse of the state and the depredations of the money economy in a positive direction.

First, it is often not realized that in sub-Saharan Africa, aside from in the minority of countries with a large, white settler population and valuable resources (such as diamonds or copper), there was little penetration of capitalist agricultural forms or government into the interior. In the colonial era, as Africanist Alex Thomson notes, "the imperial powers had only limited goals. There was no desire to invest resources to ensure the state could project its authority into every corner of the new colonies."

And, after independence, settler states excepted, Goran Hyden, in *African Politics in Comparative Perspective*, states, "Elsewhere, Africans remained only marginally affected by the market. They increasingly traded in the market, but their base was still a homestead and family farm where a subsistence ethos prevailed."

Secondly, such limited links was in the interest of the colonists, who purposely created a semi-working class. Thomson states, "Mine owners and farm managers rely on the fact that peasants [who come to work temporarily] are also producing for themselves back on their smallholdings (farmed in their absence by their families) As workers have this additional source of subsistence, wages can be kept low."

The salient points are these. No matter how wide the impact

of world capitalism, much of sub-Saharan Africa has not been effectively shaped by state or market power. Moreover, while in South America there is a struggle to develop an alternative economy, in the parts of Africa under discussion, a robust subsistence economy, unconcerned with profit and capital expansion, continues to exist.

On our trip to The Gambia to visit our daughter, Ana, a Peace Corps volunteer, we went up country to a North River Fula village. Drawing upon Ana's knowledge—she has lived in the village for 18 months and speaks the Fula language—we were able to get firsthand view of life in a non-monetarized, subsistence culture. We saw that while there were people who left the village to seek work in the capital, many chose to stay home, existing at a subsistence level but with ample amounts of time for religious and cultural practices, including socializing while drinking *grinty* (green tea) and eating peanuts.

Life is simple. The Fula raise cattle, and grow millet and peanuts. Meals are either millet (breakfast and dinner) or rice (lunch), spiced up with "wicked" sauce. Fresh milk accompanies all repasts. That's it for variety. Food is taken by hand, without utensils. A triply brewed *grinty*, made in child-size teapots and drunk from shot glasses, is the beverage for leisure time. Water for washing clothes and bathing is drawn from a well and carried home in a bucket. Houses are made from dried red clay, dug from a nearby pit and shaped and set in a wooden mold. Home furnishings are spartan, consisting solely of a bed.

**I**n capitalist society, money earned may be spent on friends and family, but a large part is customarily invested in the earner's own future. In the subsistence economy, by contrast, an individual who has acquired wealth feeds it back into the whole community, not only as a form of conspicuous consumption, but in recognition that all good fortune arises, not via personal initiative (primarily), but through one's participation in a collectivity. Hyden underlines this point by citing an anthropologist, who "shows how [African] individuals who have recently acquired their wealth spend lavishly on such private ceremonies as funerals and weddings to demonstrate their commitment to local institutions of kinship."

Such focus on the ceremonies of gift-giving was evident in our village. As a present to our hosts, we brought a 50 kilo bag of rice. The day after we arrived, a special ritual took place to give thanks to Allah and divide the grain between the seven compounds that made up the unit. The local Muslim preacher first led the group in prayer, each of us holding out our arms, palms upward, in a receiving gesture. Then the rice was evenly distributed between seven large pots. After the division of the food, a second prayer was offered.

In such a world where the giving and taking of gifts plays such a big role, cooperation (in farming, herding and decision-making) takes precedence over individualism, a rare trait in such societies. This was clear in the Fulas' attitude toward individual possession. When a villager wants to borrow something, say a scissors, he or she goes to the owner's house, asks and receives it. If the owner is out, the visitor still takes the scissors. All parties see this as acceptable practice.

This openness extends to land. One night we saw a villager burning a field in preparation for planting. I asked the man, Immagi, I was standing with—those who went to high school



spoke English—whose land this was. He, replied, “It’s his if he works on it.” He elaborated, “All land is free.”

Village solidarity is constantly cemented by rituals of hospitality, at weddings, births and in the reception of guests. When we arrived mid-evening, everyone from the compound, from babies toted by mothers to the respected elders, came to our house to welcome us and ask, “How is your day?” The next afternoon we went to each compound to sit, pass the time and eat peanuts.

This, by the way, is the most striking feature of the non-money environment, passing time. Great chunks of the day are reserved for socializing. What one gets in abundance is the time to chat, to discuss, dispute, joke, josh, sing, reminisce and dream with others. The hottest part of the day—average temperature is 90 to 100 degrees year-round—and in the long, breeze-blessed evenings, everyone hangs out.

On the negative side, the Fula have a patriarchal society as evidenced in the fact that the women have more chores. This is true throughout the region. Hyden cites a study that notes women provide nearly three-quarters of the labor in food production. In this village, at least, this is not acutely alienated labor. When women work washing clothes or pounding millet, for instance, it is done in the compound’s open center, under a tree and in company with other women with whom they carry on a lively dialogue. Work and conversation blend.

Let’s return to the point about the work cultures of the marginalized. Mike Davis envisions a future in which the ultra-poor, massed into mega-metropolises cling by their fingernails to the unraveling edges of the capitalist system. But de Sousa Santos and his fellow authors argue that, facing an option of generalized immiseration, the excluded are beginning to cast around for alternative economies. The reinvigoration of a still intact subsistence sector offers one such alternative.

But we can go further by providing a more in-depth examination of the state’s withering. As suggested, this change does not entail the complete dismantling of government functions, which are immediately taken over by the democratic institutions of the poor. Rather, what is happening in Africa is a tripartite devolution that encompasses: 1) a fundamental reorganization of state structures; 2) a depletion of the government’s ability to rule; and 3) a loss of sovereignty.

1. Since independence, most sub-Saharan African countries have been one-party states, headed by corrupt strong men who rule by combining military coercion with the distribution of favors to well-placed followers.

In his study of African political systems, Hyden says that, as in any political system, the most stable one-party states depend more on a network of supportive clients than on violence. The intelligent strong man sees that not only his immediate cronies (who staff the state) but regional and tribal leaders of every significant stripe must be cultivated by financing infrastructural projects (that offer prime opportunities for graft) in their bailiwicks. This creates a rough and ready democracy, though only among elite factions.

But with structural adjustment policies forced upon these nations, this form of government has ceased to exist because funds to sustain the patronage networks are no longer there. In a movement to shore up elite rule, there has been a widespread morphing into multi-party democracies. From 1988 to 1999 the

number of states in sub-Saharan Africa featuring multi-party elections went from 9 to 45. This temporarily and cynically solves two problems for state rule.

It restores a patina of legitimacy to a system that can no longer provide either patronage or (see below) welfare services to its citizens, and reinvigorates it by dividing clients among the competing parties, so each political grouping has need to siphon fewer funds since it serves a smaller client base.

2. Another loss of state power is the inability of it to provide minimal welfare to the citizenry, such as education and medical care, which structural adjustment programs eliminate as too costly. While some of these services are taken over by international relief organizations, most that are continued are done so by groups from the distressed society itself. In other words, as Thomson puts it, “Declining state capacity required civil society to increase its self sufficiency.” The once-repressed women’s groups, trade unions, farmers associations, and other grassroots networks are assuming greater responsibility in social and economic life.

To put this more graphically, let me refer to the Fula village again. In our settlement, there was a women’s group made up of females from all seven compounds that had set up an organization to sell “soured” milk (something like yogurt), which they took by cab to Banjul and peddled in office buildings. Ideally, as the government becomes less able to provide services, it is groups like this women’s band—not merely as entrepreneurs, but as directors of village/city contact—that will come to the fore as more democratic creators of social networks.

3. The state, which at independence, could set economic policies, now has lost this aspect of its sovereignty, since it is now be ruled by the diktats of international monetary agencies. Nonetheless, the very poverty of sub-Saharan Africa means that the retrenchment demanded of the countries there will not equal what is seen in South America. While, for example, in the 1990s, Brazil and Argentina saw the vast proletarianization of their middle classes, Africa does not have a middle class of any dimension to be downsized. Moreover, many of the African countries (such as The Gambia) lack the infrastructure or valuable natural resources to make them super attractive to the predators of international capital.

Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania after independence, called for an “African road to socialism,” in which his country would return to the communist structures of village life without having to pass through capitalism. His hopes were never realized, but it could be that a different type of social structure is now on the horizon.

The standard history of Western Europe depicts a move from feudal to democratic states, which simultaneously becomes more representative and extend their reach farther into society. The change in Africa, by contrast, entails a move from dictatorial to more representative democracies, concomitant with a diminishment of the state’s power over society.

So, what about an “African road to anarchism,” whereby the money economy and the state, which are in a condition of partial collapse or withdrawal, cede more and more functions to non-monetarized, non-statist village communities that are organized on the basis of mutual aid? Anything else is Davis’ grim vision of a planet of slums, or worse, a generalized Somalia or Iraq.



# Shoplifting

Continued from Page 29

used lawbreaking to prove his daring and political passion.

M.'s story suggests that our decision to obey the law or break it when we're in a store—one of the places where we interact most directly with capitalism—may sometimes have more to do with the cravings of the body and the emotional parts of the mind than with any ideological belief in the usual sense.

Other cases pointed in similar directions. R. acquired her shoplifting habit while squatting in London, where she would sometimes leave the things she stole on the street for others, so that her disobedience would not be for purely selfish reasons.

Today, she splits her time between holding a straight job and working for a radical publisher, and steals only on occasion. She feels a pang of "middle-class guilt" when she does, yet she still nicks an overpriced bag of coffee every once in a while, especially during times when the brutality of the state becomes glaring, such as the Republican National Convention in 2004. "It's like a compulsion," she told me. "I just surprise myself sometimes. It's some other state of mind, an irrational anger at the system."

Even those who saw their stealing from a very different perspective gave emotional reasons for engaging in it. Paxus Calta is an anti-nuclear power campaigner who also teaches workshops on "honest seduction" and other elements of personal politics. Unlike some of the other people I spoke with, Paxus sees shoplifting as somewhat useful in cultivating a radical life.

"I do it for lots of reasons," he wrote in an email. "At the top of my personal list is staying in practice being criminal—remaining cool while committing a small crime." He acknowledged that shoplifting in itself is not an effective way to confront capitalism, but pointed out that "if done right, it gets people challenging property relations in their minds and hearts."

But Paxus also emphasized irrational elements in his shoplifting. While it comes "in part from a reasoned place," he wrote, that there is also "a childish thrill in it," a feeling of wildness that is crucial to his conception of anarchy.

For each of these individuals, stealing provides an outlet for some of the most primary radical emotions: childish pleasure, impulsive rebellion against unjust authority, and the eupho-

ria of disobedience. All three of our shoplifters acknowledge that it does not add up to effective anti-capitalist resistance. All three say they find other forms of action more politically interesting: M. mentioned labor organizing, R. mentioned sustainable gardening, and Paxus mentioned smuggling, non-violent civil disobedience, revealing state secrets, and property destruction to advance political agendas.

But there's an obvious difference between shoplifting and these other tactics. They take rigorous organization and lots of time. Some involve building trusted networks. Some entail serious risk of imprisonment, especially in this era of Green Scare repression.

These are tactics of delayed gratification. And, while they are absolutely crucial to any program for change, perhaps there is room for another, supplementary space, a politics of instant gratification that might give activists more places to direct their spontaneous energy.

If shoplifting satisfies some crucial lust in the radical heart, how can we take that passion—spontaneous, impulsive, even irresponsible—and project it on to other kinds of projects in

**"If done right, it gets people challenging property relations in their minds and hearts."**

addition to individualized stealing? I imagine cat-burglar raids

on the Exxon Mobil headquarters, spontaneous sit-ins at the offices of temp labor centers or university chancellors, or anti-war protests in Greyhound Bus stations.

These actions should be as spontaneous as possible and just dangerous enough to give you a rush. Imagine the impulses that bring you to steal, and ask yourself if there's any other way you might gratify them.

This is a call for more improvisational political possibilities, and just as musical improvisation usually depends on practice, political improvisation would require some initial network building. The simplest example I can think of are the text message networks that allow Critical Mass bike rides to split up at the sight of police, then re-integrate twenty minutes later in a completely unplanned location.

It would take work to provide these spaces, but radicals would probably appreciate it. After engaging in the politics of delayed gratification all day, many of them are looking for a quick and easy outlet for their discontent. It won't bring down the status quo on its own, but increased impulsive and emotional possibilities might help make the arena of resistance more vibrant, satisfying, and ecstatic.

## Getting Off Easy Men & Pornography!

*Getting Off: Pornography and the End of Masculinity*, Robert Jensen, South End Press, 2007, 197 pages

By Sean Flynn

It is hard to read Robert Jensen's *Getting Off* without getting drawn into an internal debate about power and desire and without feeling that there is a greater economic issue that the author, a

journalism prof at the University of Texas at Austin, has left essentially untouched.

Porn is a billion dollar industry in the United States, and it shares mainstream distribution and production networks with so-called "family" and "Christian" oriented corporations. Eighty-nine percent of porn is created in the U.S., \$2.84 billion in revenue was generated from U.S. porn sites in 2006; 72 percent of porn viewers are men, and 260 new porn

sites go online daily. One can only estimate the total number of the workforce involved, both in front of and behind the cameras

But *Getting Off* is not a follow-the-money book. It is about personal choices, social activism, and in many ways about personal confessions. In this sense, it is an alienating read and only a step in the right direction in talking about the issue of misogyny.



# Robert Jensen argues that pervasive extreme pornography hurts both women and men, but does he make his case?

Jensen focuses on the increase in production of gonzo porn; that category in which extreme or degrading acts are the central images. Kind of like the "Jack-ass" version of dirty movies. The book makes its case against pornography through graphically described scenes of irrefutable exploitation and in some cases physical pain. There are, in fact, far too many graphically recounted scenes for the reader to consume (did he really watch all of these?), plus, there is a certain degree of self-righteousness in presenting this to the reader; a sense that we will be in denial or even complicit if we skip a page.

There is a certain value in Jensen's depiction of how common porn is in men's lives, and how as it has become so mainstreamed it has fallen out of discourse and debate. But the normalization of exploitation is not news; network TV sit-coms feature sequential half hour programming of tittering about sex, to say nothing of cable shows like "Sex in the City."

Perhaps the greatest value of the text is Jensen's appeal for men to join the fight against toxic masculinity and in the power of the book's final statement: "I choose to renounce being a man; I choose to struggle to be a human being." For both men and women it is indeed a struggle to be more than the sum of our bodies and our socialized compulsions, but his implorations seem to offer little to hang a hat on.

His call is akin to asking men to give up watching professional sports (with the ragged edge being cage fighting) because of their psychic tie-in to militarist and competitive mind sets. What is never addressed is why men, and some women, watch porn. In classical social theory, porn qualifies as what Herbert Marcuse called repressive desublimation—what was previously suppressed into the unconscious is released but still chains the conscious mind to ruling ideas.

Jensen says he doesn't want government censorship, but dependence upon calling for individual ethical will

for avoidance of a compelling genre doesn't seem very powerful. And, he really doesn't make his case.

Does the mass proliferation of porn affect men's attitude toward sexuality as negatively as he claims?

If there's so much of it filtering into men's minds, why hasn't there been a massive increase in violence towards women which he claims porn engenders? Statistics show levels of rape and assaults of women, although alarmingly high, have not increased with the mass expansion of pornography over the last twenty years.

Isn't misogyny greater in societies where porn barely exists such as in Saudi Arabia? Is porn consumption a reaction to women's increased power within Western society, or, is it just plain old voyeurism that is made easily accessible through mass communication technology that bids up what the porn consumers expect? Ordinary vanilla sex just doesn't cut it as it used to when it was underground and passed hand to hand behind a school or in a men's locker room. Viewers expect more and more, so the damned weirdest and often disturbing stuff appears on porn sites. Jensen says this raises men's expectations for kinky sex at home, but it's hard to believe too many women are going for it.

Also, Jensen discusses quite disarmingly his own obsession with pornography, so is this a case of a recovering addict demanding that no one else be tempted by what got him hooked and feeling guilty?



Our late friend, Richard Mock, often said his linocuts were ambiguous enough that they could accompany almost any article, or certainly stand alone. The one above seems like a perfect example.

So, what do we do about porn, or, for that matter, should we do anything? There's probably nothing currently that can erode the mass appeal it has to men in a society drenched in sexual anxiety. Not paying for it and enriching the entrepreneurs who profit from our lust and/or sexual misery is a good starting point, but catching yourself watching is no reason to induce another level of guilt or shame. However, if you find yourself attracted to the pretty awful material Jensen describes, and he was obsessed with, it might be worth asking yourself why. A little self-analysis never hurt anyone.

One Fifth Estate staffer says there's a lot of non-sexist, DIY porn out there, as well as feminist generated sexually explicit material. I was going to write, perhaps those would be more appropriate places to satisfy one's voyeurism, but saying that is little different than what Jensen asks of us: Watch what I think is appropriate.





# Victorian Proto-Punk, Riot Grrls

by Cara Hoffman

## The Literary Legacy of Helen and Olivia Rossetti

Helen in the Rosetti Library. From William Michael Rossetti, *Some reminiscences*.

In 1903, two young sisters, Helen and Olivia Rossetti, published a novel under the pseudonym Isabel Meredith, chronicling their lives as radicals, propagandists, and key figures in the European anarchist movement of that era. Prior to that, while still in their teens, they edited *The Torch—An International Newspaper of Communist Anarchism*, from 1891–96, which scandalously called for sexual equality, the destruction of religion, and the end of state rule by violent means.

Their novel, *A Girl among the Anarchists*, was unprecedented for the scope of its political content, and revelatory of life in an underground movement. Though it remains a keen study of radical responses to universal feelings of rage, boredom, and resignation at the heart of girlhood experience, it has managed to slip through the cracks of anarchist and feminist history.

The book's honest and unapologetic depiction of subversive culture contains an irreverence, pride and swagger that would not appear in women's literature for another sixty years. It rings with self-possession that is still broadly lacking from the modern "chick lit" of today.

Originally published in London by Duckworth & Company, the novel was met with hostile criticism and perceived as an oddity to the extent that it disappeared for ninety years, burying with it the history of *The Torch*.

In 1992, during a resurgence of interest in anarchism created in part by growing international awareness of militant opposition to the World Bank and IMF, the University of Nebraska Press republished the text. Now, 16 years later, it is distributed by the anti-authoritarian AK Press.

The novel's protagonist and the DIY attitudes and histories of the authors fit well with the anarcho-punk rock aesthetics associated with AK. The book's reemergence in the late 20th century makes it possible to recast the Rossetti girls in a new light as proto- "riot grrls;" young, educated middle-class wom-

en, violently opposed to authority, the dominant culture, and feminine aesthetics. The sisters were a recognized part of a counter-culture, but irreverently critical of their own "scene," particularly in terms of misogyny, incompetence and irresponsibility toward others.

While the issues addressed in the novel concerning power, violence, authority, and the idiosyncrasies of anarchists, possess a timelessness within the movement, readers who could probably best relate to the book's protagonist, may have been several generations from being born. *The Torch* anticipated the radical girl-zines and blogs of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and in many cases went well beyond them in its analysis.

Readers of contemporary magazines like *Bust* and *Bitch*, *Fifth Estate*, and *Anarchy*, would find their politics and aesthetics fully represented by the literary and journalistic writing of the Rossettis and the book's narrator, Isabel Meredith.

### Emma Goldman describes the sisters

The Rossetti sisters (Olivia—1875–1960; Helen—1879–1969) were nieces of the English, Pre-Raphaelite painter, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Their mother and father were interested in art, literature and politics. It is easy to picture the privileged Victorian sisters taking up a cause that would hold social, aesthetic or academic interests, but it is a stretch to imagine girls just past the age of puberty cranking out feminist and anti-government tracts in their bedroom.

Emma Goldman describes the sisters and their publishing efforts in her autobiography, *Living My Life*, thusly: "They were developed in mind and body beyond their age. They did all the writing for the newspaper, even setting the type and attending the press work themselves. *The Torch* office, formerly the nursery of the girls, became a gathering place for



foreign anarchists, particularly from Italy. While in London I spent much time with them greatly enjoying their prodigious hospitality and atmosphere of their circle."

Helen and Olivia quickly became pivotal figures in the European socialist and anarchist movements, soliciting and publishing seminal works within the movement including articles by Goldman, Sabastien Faure, Louise Michel, Malato and Malatesta. They were also the first to print George Bernard Shaw's, "Why I am an Anarchist," as well as stories by Emille Zola and illustrations by Pissarro.

At the time of *The Torch's* popularity, women worked primarily as teachers, household servants, or prostitutes. Upper class women, like Helen and Olivia, were expected to read, sew and receive guests, changing into a variety of different restrictive v-waist dresses for each activity. They were entirely dependent on male family members and no laws existed to protect their economic, social, or reproductive rights.

One can imagine the spiritual impoverishment of this kind of life—the horror and rage of living under these expectations. This institutionalized repression was a catalyst to the privileged Rossettis who championed political causes in ways others could not or would not due to limitations in their intellectual, economic or social upbringings.

### Desperate acts of women

In contrast to Helen and Olivia's literary and political interests, the majority of writing by English women published during the same period comprised romances, children's literature, fairy tales, historic, and patriotic novels. Even today the majority of women's literature is focused on romance, mysteries, and sensationalist memoir.

According to Angus McLaren, who wrote about sexual restrictions of the era, "*The Torch* stressed that it was necessary to understand, if not condone the desperate acts of women who, given existing social mores, were endangered by their own fertility. The journal defended Minnie Wells and Amy Gregory, who were sentenced to death for having . . . drowned her two babies. In March 1895, *The Torch* similarly represented Amy Gregory, who had strangled her child, as a victim of society. Was it a surprise it asked, that Gregory a twenty-three-year-old laundress who having given birth in a workhouse, starving, turned out of her house and unemployed should have killed her baby daughter to protect her from a life of pain?"

Before the Rossettis were eighteen, they had used their privilege and connections not only to publish, but to fund anti-state activities, host, hide and transport anarchist radicals, and maintain a covert network of support for a group of militant Italian anarchists and internationalists.

In addition to reproductive rights, the sisters were in complete support of free love and sexual equality for women. In the novel, their alter-ego, Isabel Meredith, is not stigmatized by speaking frankly about sex and politics with men, and she often sleeps with them in the paper's office. Meredith also gives many examples of characters for which non-traditional sexual arrangements are working well. The sisters used their newspaper as a platform to bring these issues to the public.

McLaren writes, "*The Torch* paraded an advanced sex-radicalism. It attacked as 'the goody-goody old cats' the prudes who attempted to close the Empire, a popular music hall, castigated the police for harassing prostitutes, and leapt to the defense of Edith Lanchester, a young woman who had been committed

At the height of England's Victorian Age, the Rosetti sisters edited an anarchist communist paper, met with Kropotkin and Emma Goldman, advocated free love, and destruction of religion and the state through vilolent means . . . all before their 18th birthdays

to an asylum by her parents when she sought to live, unmarried with a socialist." Ideas that women should experience the same pleasure and control over their sexual lives were also part of the newspaper's vision.

"In Britain, *The Torch* went further in its sex radicalism than any other leftist journal," McLaren noted, "The nineteenth-century British Socialist movement was fairly prudish. Most of *The Torch's* articles on sex issues were the product of Fersenheim, a Berliner who wrote under the name of F.S. Paul. He followed a familiar leftist line in attacking bourgeois marriage as a crass commercial transaction, but also chided other anarchist males for not recognizing women's sexual needs. He sounded a new note for the left in England in defending birth control. Fersenheim also said 'every woman has an inalienable right to do with her body whatever she likes, to give herself to whomever she likes.'"

The girls writing on women's sexual equality prefigures the work of Simone de Beauvoir on sexual liberation by decades.

### A specific call to smash the state

The fact that this work was being disseminated by young women living at home was unprecedented, but the popularity of *The Torch* indicates that their political views had found a readership interested in both anarchism and feminist cultural aesthetics. And, indeed, there were young educated people turning away from traditional Victorian life, answering a specific call to smash the state.

Like many in that era, the girls were radicalized by reading Peter Kropotkin's pamphlet, "Appeal to the Young," a slim publication written in 1880 which was directed by the Russian anarchist mainly to an audience of "intellectuals." Kropotkin appears as a major character in the novel, his name changed to Voratin, and readers can only assume that this is a true account of Helen and Olivia's coming to anarchism. The Rossettis also met Kropotkin shortly after they had begun production on the paper as is described in David Weir's *Anarchy and Culture: The Aesthetic Politics of Modernism*.

Weir writes, "When Prince Peter Kropotkin first visited Rossetti, he was informed that his presence was requested in the nursery. He bustled off full of benevolence and was considerably surprised when a girl of fourteen handed him a printed sheet of paper and said dryly 'will you sign a statement to say



that you agree with the political platform of *The Torch*?' The eminent anarchist was delighted to do so. . ."

As *The Torch* gained recognition and popularity, the Rossettis moved their office out of their nursery and into the London streets, renting (and being evicted from) a series of bohemian digs.

Their character Meredith lauds the others in the novel for their complexity, intellect and plain hard boiled eccentricities. But she also assigns mocking nicknames to slacker comrades such as "the buttered muffin" who is described as "a youth of no particular intelligence, and certainly no ideality or political or anti-political convictions. I was quite at a loss to conjecture why he had followed the anarchists into exile—his only apparent reason being a disinclination to study and a desire to escape from school."

Another character, emblematic of masculine laziness is named simply, "Short." Which he is in every way; short on intelligence, patience, compassion, dedication, solidarity, money, ethics, and perhaps there is a sexual innuendo as well. Short is no doubt the anarchist foil which has made some critics feel the book is little more than a mockery of the movement. Even in the introduction to the 1992 edition, Jennifer Shaddock criticizes Meredith's characterizations of anarchists as "camp" and "parody."

### Girl's guide to revolution

But as many of us know, Short is very real, and the movement is constantly at risk of attracting "Shorts," those who see the philosophy and aesthetics of anarchism as a way to avoid personal responsibility, or are short on sanity. I would hazard to guess there are few anarchist or left publications in the world that do not struggle with the ethical question of what to do with the member or contributor whose mental health issues masquerade as ideology.

The Rossettis bring this fully to light, expressing exasperation at the Shorts and at the tolerance within radical circles for the Shorts of the world. These common characters and very common questions make the book a sardonic sort of girl's guide to revolution.

The novel also exposes misogyny within the movement, something Helen and Olivia were confronted with continually, as this fictionalized comrade makes clear: "Women are so rarely of much use in a movement like ours. They so rarely seem able to forget themselves, to detach themselves from the narrow interests of their own lives. They are slaves of their past. Of their passions and of all manner of prejudices."

Their answer to the masculine slackers and misogynist ideologues appears in the form of Vera Marcel—an amalgam of females in the movement described as: "A woman of blood and smoke and infinite mercies towards men and beasts. . . who had never hesitated at shedding blood in the good cause, nor feared to face death for it; but with her friends and especially with children, she was gentle as the gentlest of her sex and nothing can describe the extreme sweetness of her voice."

Marcel is the Rossettis' direct answer to the sexism that was (and still is) so much a part of the experience of being a politically active woman.

In their novel, the Rossettis took on the topic of creating an anti-authoritarian movement with a practicality that is still often lacking in anarchist circles, combining the principles of mutual aid and personal responsibility with a call for the love

of beauty and reflection. Their work predates Guy Debord and the Situationists by half a century in decrying boredom among all classes as a corrosive social evil and anarchism as the answer.

Theirs were not party line attitudes gleaned from reading Bakunin, but individual voices that were brushed aside by anarchist and mainstream critics alike. The only widely published review *A Girl among the Anarchists* received was rife with misogynistic hostility.

In 1903, *The New York Times* ran a few brief paragraphs on the novel which appeared alongside praise for Rudyard Kipling and Joseph Conrad, both of whom were publishing new works that year. (Conrad had, in fact, interviewed the Rossettis for his novel, *Nostromo*, and used the girls' accounts of the 1894 anarchist bomb attack on the Royal Observatory in Greenwich Park, London, which he recounted in *The Secret Agent*.)

In his *Times* review, W.L. Alden wrote that he had not even read the book, but went on to say, "If the writer had described herself as a woman among the anarchists, no fault could have been found with her title page, but when she deliberately asks us to consider her as a girl, she impliedly asks us to consider her book as unworthy of attention. For surely there can be little worth noticing in what a girl might write concerning political matters, or for that matter, concerning anything."

Anarchist historian George Woodcock writing in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century also has condescending words for the sisters whose work he describes as "inspired in admiration." His account of their life in the movement reduces the girls to a happy accident in radical history.

He failed entirely to discuss the merit of the ideological and political work taken on by the Rossettis, including their funding of direct action and providing sanctuary for fugitives, work which is explicitly and complexly covered in the novel and achieved at the risk of imprisonment. The critics who do tackle the Rossettis seem stuck on a constant refrain pointing to their immaturity, privilege, naiveté, and charm, an utterly strange response in discussing children who, for their entire adolescence, called cheerfully for murder.

The book's final pages deal specifically with Meredith's desire to have a fully integrated life, one allowing for sexual and intellectual freedom, revolutionary activity, loving commitment, and acceptance of beauty and complexity. Unhappy with both the romanticism of patriarchal society and the masculinist revolution that seeks to correct it, she is left looking at the emptiness of living with either of these choices. This romanticism, which places ideology over individual pleasures and human necessities, convinces her to leave the newspaper.

The decision resonates with Meredith's existence as an ordinary, solitary, individual without faith in romantic prospects, not even for the political movement in which she was held in thrall. This dislocation is born from a desire that comprises the very core of anarchist thought expressed, even if fancifully, by Emma Goldman: "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution."

The Rossettis remained controversial figures after ceasing publication of *The Torch*. Olivia married an Italian anarchist, moved to Italy where she worked for the League of Nations. She also, shockingly, was an early supporter of fascism and campaigned to release poet Ezra Pound from prison for his collaboration with the Italian fascists. Helen continued to write, publishing three significant books on art history.



## Review

by Don LaCoss



Car bomb explodes in Iraq

# The Car Bomb: Poor Man's F16

*Buda's Wagon: A Brief History of the Car Bomb*, by Mike Davis, 2007, Verso, 228 pp., \$22.95

Mike Davis argues forcibly that the “vehicle-borne improvised explosive device” (in Pentagon parlance) is a weapon of mass destruction. Keying in on the terrible effectiveness of this weapon (“an inconspicuous vehicle, anonymous in almost any urban setting, to transport large quantities of high explosive into precise range of a high-value target”), Davis underscores the inevitability of its proliferation as globalized capitalism industrially overdevelops every corner of the world, “like a kudzu vine of destruction taking root in the thousand fissures of ethnic and religious enmity that globalization has paradoxically revealed.”

In short, the car bomb is the hot rod to Hell in the age of asymmetrical, open-source warfare. In 1983, a couple well-placed vehicle bombs in Lebanon defeated Ronald Reagan and the combined might of the US Sixth Fleet. “The average family SUV with 10 cubic feet of cargo space can transport a 1000-pound bomb,” Davis says. “Every laser-guided missile falling on an apartment house in southern Beirut or a mud-walled compound in Kandahar is a future suicide truck bomb headed for the center of Tel Aviv or perhaps downtown Los Angeles.”

Historically speaking, the “radical potential” of car bombs “would be fully realized only after the barbarism of strategic bombing had become commonplace, and after air forces routinely pursued insurgents into the labyrinths of poor cities.” In fact, the car bomb is the “poor man's air force *par excellence*”: compared to the \$1 million price tag on every single US cruise missile that is hurled at a target, Davis writes, “40 or 50 people can be massacred with a stolen car and approximately \$500 of fertilizer and bootlegged electronics.”

### The car bomb is “an inherently fascist weapon”

In this aspect, *Buda's Wagon* can be read as a complement (or even a sequel) to Sven Lindqvist's excellent study, *A History of Bombing* (1999; English translation 2001). Lindqvist makes the provocative point that the technologies of bombardment from the air were not an integrated development in this general sweep of the history of warfare, but actually a completely unique approach with drastically different norms and forms. Davis makes a very similar argument about the car bomb's semi-strategic ability to rethink what constitutes a “high-value target.”

Like an air force bombing raid, “collateral damage” is guaranteed with the vehicle bomb. “If the logic of an attack is to slaughter civilians and sow panic in the widest circle, to operate a ‘strategy of tension’ or just demoralize a society, car bombs are ideal.” Davis concludes that, when all is said and done, the car bomb is “an inherently fascist weapon guaranteed to leave its perpetrators awash

in the blood of innocents,” adding that “this categorical censure, of course, applies even more forcible to the mass terror against civilian populations routinely inflicted by the air forces and armies of so-called ‘democracies’ like the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Israel.”

As demonstrated in his previous books like *City of Quartz*, *Planet of Slums*, and *The Ecology of Fear*, Davis is entirely capable of laying out keen explanations that analyze the sophisticated political, social, and economic environments under scrutiny. For *Buda's Wagon*, he deliberately avoids any deep discussion of the political grievances that motivate the car bombers, preferring instead to keep the focus on the technical changes over time that have gone into the development of the car bomb as an ideologically-neutral technology.

Davis chooses to ignore those instances when booby-trapped cars are used to try to kill specifically-targeted individuals (like the 1976 CIA and Chilean secret police conspiracy to blow up Orlando Letelier in Washington DC and the attempt by the FBI and/or the Oakland police department to murder Earth First!er Judi Bari in 1990) in order to stay centered on his central “poor man's air force” thesis.

### Car-bomb universities

But to his credit, Davis's discussion goes beyond non-State agents of terrorism to include the use of car bombs by State defense and espionage agencies, police apparatuses, and government-sanctioned death squads. His insights into the British Army's Special Air Services close collaboration with Northern Ireland's Loyalist paramilitaries in bombing a busy shopping district in Dublin and a pub in Monaghan Town in May 1974, are chilling reminders of State terrorism, as is Davis's look at the CIA's gruesome failure to kill the Hezbollah leader Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah at the Imam Riad Mosque in Beirut in 1985.

His chapter on the “car-bomb universities” run by the US, Pakistani, and Saudi spy agencies in Peshawar refugee camps in the 1980s will come as a shock to anyone who has swallowed the sugar-coated spin of recent historical revisions (like that loathsome recent Hollywood movie *Charlie Wilson's War*) of the CIA's secret war in Afghanistan between 1985 and 1988.

The black-budget car-bomb colleges run by CIA director William Casey schooled an estimated 35,000 violent Sunni mujahideen in techniques (including the camel bomb)

*Continued on Page 52*



# My Green Scare Arrest

*Continued from Page 5*

was photographed and put in a cell with another woman going through withdrawal from heroin. We had some very interesting conversations about life and her addiction.

I wasn't allowed a phone call to tell anyone where I was. After 36 hours, I was interviewed and asked by a jail shrink if I wanted to kill myself, and then showered again and given the charming circus balloon outfit all the federal inmates wear. I made a quick call to the only number I could remember, a friend from the IWW. It was late at night, so I was placed in one cell and then moved at dawn the next day to another cell block.

I had no way to call from my new location since I didn't have access to the commissary where I could buy a phone card. There wasn't much food I could eat, since my vegan diet prevented me from eating anything but applesauce,

oatmeal, or the occasional steamed vegetable. I spent my time playing cards and scrabble with the other inmates, getting to know some of them.

I was in my cell reading the next day while the rest of the block was out in the main area watching television. Suddenly, there was a huge uproar and my bunkie came running into the cell. "You were on TV!," she yelled excitedly. The local news station had run a special on the Green Scare cases. They reported my arrest and ran stock pictures of the arson at Vail, Colorado, though my case has nothing to do with that action. From what the other inmates said, the report made me sound pretty scary.

**A**fter a couple of days, my friends on the outside got me a phone card and it was such a relief to be in touch with them and my daughter again. I discovered that most cell phones and many landlines won't take collect calls from jails. At first, I thought this meant my friends were refusing my calls, but folks inside told me the phones didn't interface sometimes.

I was still without a lawyer, and still unsure of what was happening with my co-defendants. Most importantly, I didn't know that Frank Ambrose (my soon-to-be-ex-husband) was cooperating with the feds. He had actually been cooperating with them for nearly a year and had been gathering evidence by traveling around the country and visiting me and other friends.

After a week in the Butler County jail, I was awakened very early, cuffed and shackled, and brought to the intake area. I had not been told, but I was being extradited to Michigan that day. I was driven to the federal building and brought to a holding cell to wait. Again, with the endless frisking and waiting around in cells.

After several hours, I was cuffed and shackled again and taken to the basement parking lot and placed in an agent's car. From there, we drove at frightening and excessive speeds to reach an airport in Kentucky where a private government plane flew me to Grand Rapids, Michigan.

I appeared in federal court there before a magistrate, and refused the offer of a public defender, insisting that I would soon retain counsel of my choice. I was bound over for trial and taken to the

Newaygo County Jail in White Cloud, a small mid-Michigan town.

The next day in jail, I received a message that my family had retained an attorney for me. The following day, I was awakened early and cuffed and shackled and taken back to the federal building in Grand Rapids. Once there, I met John Minock, who within seconds entered the official record as my attorney. He had me "stand mute" before the court, a version of "not guilty," and made a motion for me to be released on a non-cash bond as my co-defendants, Aren Burthwick and Stephanie Fultz had been in Detroit.

This was denied, based on federal prosecutor Hagen Frank's unfounded allegation that I was a threat to the community's safety and a flight risk on the basis of what they called my "international contacts," since I had traveled to India for the World Social Forum.

Minock countered that I could be released into my mother's custody and wear an electronic tether. This was accepted, but there was a delay because of the Easter holiday and the time needed to set up the tether.

So, I was driven back to Newaygo and spent another weekend in jail. Finally, on the Tuesday following Easter Sunday, I was taken to Grand Rapids, met with my probation officer, was attached to the tether, and released to my Mom.

I am now staying in northern Michigan under house arrest, having lost my home and job in Cincinnati. I am forced to live eight hours away from my daughter, my friends and political projects. I am able to call, write and e-mail. I can cook vegan meals and receive visitors.

It's nowhere near as uncomfortable as jail had been, but definitely a strain on my family and not the same as being free.

I'm very grateful for all the support from friends and people who have heard about my case and been in touch. And, for everyone for putting in so much effort to support my legal fund.

Thank you so much. It gives me so much hope to see such solidarity. As a strong community of resistance, we can withstand the repression of the state and continue to fight for the Earth everywhere.

Stay strong, I am with you in spirit. My time may be done, but yours is just beginning.

## FREE MARIE! Gear



T-Shirt: "In Solidarity with Marie Mason" - available in black and dark brown, in s/m/l/xl. \$17ppd.

CD: "Not for Profit" with EF! folksinger, Darryl Cherney; songs to defend the earth - \$7ppd

Send remittance to Fifth Estate, POB 201016, Ferndale MI 48220; (check to Fifth Estate). All proceeds go to Marie Mason Defense Fund.



# Green Scare Continues

Continued from Page 4

the earth defense cases, the government has convinced activists to betray their former comrades, and in some cases, such as with Ambrose, had them wear wires to entrap others. Eric McDavid was trapped by an FBI plant calling herself "Anna."

McDavid, one of only a handful of those accused of ELF actions to have gone to trial, received over 19 years at his sentencing in May even though he never committed an action and his group was infiltrated by a provocateur. McDavid's two other comrades also rolled over and cooperated with authorities.

In fact, the majority of those arrested have ended up cooperating with the authorities. Excluding the recent Midwest indictments, only seven of the several dozen arrested since 2005 and charged with ELF actions have refused to cooperate: Exile, Sadie, Daniel McGowan and Jonathan Paul (who were arrested in Operation Backfire, the original round of arrests in 2005 and 2006); plus Eric McDavid, Tre Arrow, and Briana Waters.

Ambrose, however, may a darker side than just run-of-the-mill betrayal of others. Court documents (available at [freemarie.org](http://freemarie.org)) discuss a non-prosecution agreement regarding an amended plea, but the US attorney has refused to release information, claiming that it is irrelevant since there will be no prosecution of Ambrose on that offense. He is widely thought to have been confronted by the Feds with material from his confiscated computer unrelated to the eco-sabotage charges, and is turning in his ex-wife and former friends in order to save himself from being prosecuted on those unspecified charges.

Mason, who is not cooperating with federal prosecutors, is currently under house arrest in Michigan and is required to wear an electronic tether; a trial date is set for August 12. The other three Detroit arrestees are free on bond. Burthwick and Fultz have not cooperated with authorities, but also declined offers of support work extended to them.

In other Green Scare news, Briana Waters' trial in Washington state ended in her conviction on charges related to her allegedly acting as a lookout during a 2001 attack on the University of Washington horticulture building. Former activists-turned-informers Lacey Phillabaum (a former *Earth First! Journal* editor) and Jennifer Kolar testified against Waters in return for reduced sentences, although Waters claimed that she was not present during the action. She was to be sentenced on June 2, but this was delayed because of revelations that evidence may have been tampered with. Her lawyers have indicated that they may appeal.

Tre Arrow is charged in connec-

tion with two 2001 arsons of trucks from belonging to Ross Island Sand and Gravel and Schoppert Logging in Oregon. Arrow, who proclaimed his innocence, fled to Canada and unsuccessfully fought extradition for years.

In March, he returned to the US, and in June, citing the convictions of Waters and McDavid, accepted a non-cooperating guilty plea to two charges. (He originally was charged with 14 counts and faced life in prison if convicted). Arrow was sentenced to six years, but will get credit for time served for the four years he was in custody in Canada. He was also turned in by a former fellow activist, Jacob Sherman.

Daniel McGowan, one of the non-cooperating arrestees who has started serving his sentence, was moved in May from Sandstone federal prison in Minnesota. He was moved without warning or explanation, and it is not clear where he is headed. He is currently in transit as we go to press.

Lastly, Jacob Ferguson, the informant who betrayed all of his former comrades resulting in one of them committing suicide, ten imprisoned, and three on the run, was also sentenced. Having admitted his involvement in almost all the Pacific Northwest eco-sabotage attacks, the court gave him five years probation in return for his modern-day Judas impersonation. He previously received \$150,000 in compensation for providing evidence against his former comrades, which included travelling around the country and interviewing them while wearing a wire in order to record incriminating statements.

In the course of the prosecutions, more incidents were made public during the sentencing period, and new indictments may

be issued for these actions. If new arrests occur, the activists will certainly face the same outrageous charges (i.e., threats of life sentences) and the same attempts to publicly and legally label them as terrorists for acts of property destruction in which no one was injured. These actions are the hallmark of the ALF and ELF and one of the reasons the groups attract sympathy and support.

Activists may wish to prepare preemptively for such eventualities, rather than being reactive when arrests are made. It seems time to form a broad coalition of legal and activist groups, formed around a simple program of: 1) resisting the outrageous sentences that are being handed down on the basis of political beliefs, and not acts, and 2) fighting the terrorism enhancement designations that add even more years to sentences.

This would provide for a flexible coalition that could include more mainstream environmentalists, legal and civil rights groups, as well as those who support the arrested for specific political reasons.

Any attempt to reverse the Green Scare will necessarily come from the legislative and legal arenas, and alliances are desperately needed.

## Crimes Confessed to by FBI Snitch, Frank Ambrose

Aug. 7, 1999 - Escanaba, Mich. - (arson) two power boats; loss \$9,436.

Aug. 22, 1999 - Bloomington, Ind. - (arson) Deer Park construction site; loss \$95,000.

Nov. 2, 1999 - Bloomington, Ind. - (vandalism) logging equipment; loss \$55,000.

Dec. 31, 1999 - East Lansing, Mich. - (arson); Michigan State University genetic research facility; loss \$1.1 million

Jan. 1, 2000 - Mesick, Mich. - (arson) logging equipment; loss \$18,000

(Jan. 23, 2000 - Bloomington, Ind. - (arson) Sterling Woods Development; loss \$200,000.

Apr. 30, 2000 - Bloomington, Ind. - (vandalism) Crider & Crider Equipment; loss \$75,000.

Jun. 26, 2000 - Bloomington, Ind. - (tree-spiking) Morgan-Monroe State Park; loss \$5,500.

Jun. 26, 2000 - Bloomington, Ind. - (tree-spiking) Yellowwood State Forest; loss \$1,600.

Jul. 2, 2000 - North Vernon, Ind. - (arson-vandalism) Rose Acre Farm; loss; \$100,000.

Oct. 18, 2000 - Shoals, Ind. - (vandalism) Martin State Park; loss \$55,000.

Mar. 21, 2003 - Superior Township, Mich. - (arson) Mystic Forest; loss, \$1,000,000.

Jun. 4, 2003 - Macomb County, Mich. - (arson) Willow Ridge; loss, \$1,000,000.

Based on the foregoing, Frank Ambrose stipulates and admits that the property destruction attributable to his pattern of criminal activity on behalf of ELF exceeded \$2,500,000 but was less than \$7,000,000. Source: Court documents.



*Expect Resistance: a field manual*, CrimethInc., \$8, CrimethInc..com.

*Rolling Thunder: an anarchist journal of dangerous living*; P.O. Box 494, Chapel Hill NC 27514; rollingthunder@CrimethInc..com

**W**hy is the CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective (CWC) the crew that the workerists love to hate? The rigidly anti-lifestyle critique levied at these so-called "arrogant middle-class kids" has become so commonplace that it's as much a caricature of itself as it is an unsophisticated slag at these prolific publishers of beautifully-crafted anarchist propaganda.

When the "ex-workers" aren't publishing gorgeous, gritty books and journals, they are "acting independently in cells to create a more joyous and free world"—a task that for CWC involves putting on successful grass roots events to subvert capitalism like the community-wide potlatches called "Really, Really Free Markets" or organizing with other anti-authoritarians to converge in defiance of the Democratic and Republican conventions later this summer.

### **Visionary cooperation and vigilant contestation**

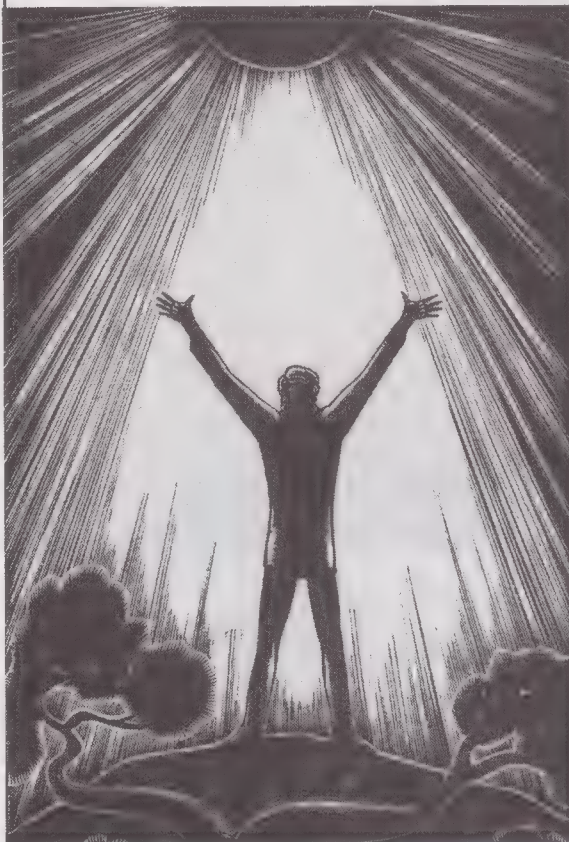
Overtly anarchist and always adamant, CWC mixes praxis with poetry in ways that draw from the best examples of our collective history of fighting the power through visionary cooperation and vigilant contestation.

When surveying the contents of their journal *Rolling Thunder* (RT), a periodical so polished that one might confuse it for a coffee-table book (except that many of the full-color photos are of what has been called "riot porn"), we get to travel from the resistance in Oaxaca, Mexico to that in South Central LA, from the practical anarchy of squats in Europe and the mid-west of the U.S. to the solidarity work of a prisoner support group. Readers can learn from 19<sup>th</sup> century anarchist icons like Lucy Parsons or Pierre Joseph Proudhon or study commentaries on the tension between ideas about—and examples of—victory and defeat in the current anarchist context.

Sure, the journal brews an elixir laced with stimulating

## **A Review/Essay CrimethInc's Overflowing Cup of Anarchist Elixir**

**By Anu Bonobo**



shots of Nietzsche and lets us sip from the lemonade springs at the Big Rock Candy Mountain, but nowhere to be found is the evidence that the writers are eternally stuck in a self-centered, lifestyle sludge. I didn't see a single article on why "Food Not Bombs" alone could supplant a critique of capital or romantic narratives on refusing to bathe after deconstructing the contents of a Whole Foods dumpster. While some zines may have a regular column on hopping trains or sewing patches, it's not RT.

### **A force for anarchy**

Perhaps the practicum on urban spelunking or the "activity page" with stencil designs fit the genre of action the workerist naysayers are talking about when they accuse CWC of middle-class lifestyleism. The frigid analysis of diatribes like "Rethinking CrimethInc." (widely regurgitated on Indymedia sites) may have applied late last century when CWC emerged as a force for anarchy, but CWC publications have evolved rather impressively over the years, and *Rolling Thunder* proves that.

When the detractors detract, do they really think they are bringing us any closer to revolution by promoting an anti-youth, anti-subculture bias? Sadly, the very practices CWC takes the most heat for from other radicals are related to the practical rituals of the gift economy that have been the glue of human community for generations.

What most often gets dubbed lifestyleism is just living life to its fullest—an anarchist impulse that stems from Emma Goldman and many others. Militant workers in the 1960s, for instance, would often join their middle-class brothers and sisters dancing wildly to psychedelic music at a rock and roll venue, high on weed, after fighting the boss a few hours earlier at the job site.

Frankly, aren't music, dancing, poetry, lust, and communal prepared and shared food merely facets of any functioning social enclave? Haven't workers of the world always fought for their right to party? (And, for radicals who prefer the chemically-enhanced aspects of "lifestyleism," it's worth noting that CWC has always advocated sobriety.)



Another flip and frequent charge against CWC concerns its debt to Situationism. In the anarchist scene during the late 1980s, Situationism proper and the post-situ perspectives of its North American kin held huge sway. Books like Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* and Raoul Vaneigem's *The Revolution of Everyday Life* were considered must-reads.

Considering that the youth are not reading Vaneigem, CWC books and 'zines function as gateway drugs into the politics of everyday life. Who cares that many CWC texts emulate the Situationist style? Isn't this form of borrowing, bending, and outright plagiarizing a tested, trusted tactic for anarchist proselytizing?

Far from perfect, some CWC works include conflation and cliché, and some of their far-flung analyses of current struggles like a recent piece entitled "Green Scared?" suffer from some ludicrous overstatements. But occasional missteps cannot undermine the spirit of the project, and seeing the way CWC publications have evolved suggests an emphasis on utility and even humility—especially when the collective authors discuss things from historical perspectives.

### Fierce manifesto and a marvelous fantasy

Perhaps the most ambitious CWC manifesto yet emerged this past spring in the form of *Expect Resistance: a field manual* (ER). When I first perused the book's format, the innovative anti-structure intimidated me; later, it intoxicated me.

The CWC web site provides an indispensable description of what ER actually intends, and I needed its explanation to expunge confusion. For example, any reader needs to understand the text's innovative structure as "three books" within one, "each of which may be read as a complete work unto itself." Basically, one book resembles *Days of War, Nights of Love* and includes "improved versions of . . . [CWC] material from 2000 to 2004." The other book (distinguished by its red ink) appears to be an anarchist novel about "the adventures and tribulations that inevitably ensue when people pursuing their dreams enter

into conflict with the world as it is." The third book, then, is the combination of all of the above.

After digesting the official blurb as one might read driving directions downloaded before a long trip, I finally began the adventure of reading ER cover-to-cover, taking notes along

**Poster for CrimethInc Convergence near Milwaukee, Wis. It advertises itself as a "sober, consensus-based, anti-capitalist space." Info at [crimethinc.com/convergence](http://crimethinc.com/convergence)**



the way. I hated (and then loved), loved (and then hated) the book. At last, I appreciated ER and admired the people who made it.

Unfortunately, the title misleads; the phrase "expect resistance" was a CWC bumpersticker before it was a book and cannot convey the many flavors of prose within. Tacking on the "field manual" tag only makes matters worse because this book is a fierce manifesto and a marvelous fantasy; not a field manual of any kind—not even for "the field where all manuals are useless," as it claims.

**The story lines invoke the emotional geography that has always made the anarchist scene an intensely intoxicating and insidiously infuriating world to inhabit.**

ER's experimental structure is finely polished and ferociously pursued. The "red letter" memoir/novel—"neither a true story nor a work of fiction"; "a chronicle of things that are going to happen"—employs multiple narrators and weaves in and out of overlapping scenarios in the manner of a Robert Altman film.

Three primary characters are temporary comrades whose tales depict of the details the best and worst of activist cultures and projects. Whether narrating a direct action, a prisoner's desperation, or the differences between cheating and polyamory, the story lines invoke the emotional geography that has always made the anarchist scene an intensely intoxicating and insidiously infuriating world to inhabit. Narrators Marshall, Pablo, and Samia each felt real enough to fall in and out of love with on multiple occasions.

### A quasi-biblical illuminated manuscript

At times, the race, gender, and class politics seem so savvy as to border on a defensive political correctness perhaps used to stave off another wave of the "arrogant middle-class white kids" backlash. Since the black ink sections are vintage CWC in terms of epic proportion, insistent proclamation, and impeccable production, when the memoir/novel slipped out of showing and into shouting, it left this reader frustrated.

At the end, ER leaves an overwhelming impression of a quasi-biblical illuminated manuscript to be studied and quoted, chapter and verse, by its inspired converts. The inner front-cover-flap claims that the book will do nothing less than invert the creation myth, reverse God's judgment, and give apples to snakes, thus invoking the "release of nature from the yoke of human will."

With *Recipes for Disaster*, CWC rewrote the *Anarchist Cookbook*; with ER, it's more like they uncovered the future scrolls of an anarchist bible. (the pages with red words reminded me of the movement of "red letter Christians" who privilege the alleged words of Jesus over the rest of their "field manual.") Even if ER is just a sacred text of science fiction, it's a highly readable, enlightened, and insightful 350 page epistle. Nothing lacks in either beauty or message on all counts.

Even at its most excessive, CWC writing represents writers all too attuned to the partial power of rhetoric. Discussing the perimeters of theory, ER owns up to its own blind-spots

*Continued on Page 51*





Left: On the road to Santiago de Cuba, one of the many horse drawn vehicles still in use. The manure goes into organic gardens.



Above: Dancing and feasting outside of Baracoa with Nongon people who later asked visitors to dance following the feast in the foreground.



Above: In Santiago de Cuba, Santeria dancers perform.

## An Anarchist in CUBA

Continued from Page 11

dants of the few original Taino people not wiped out by Spanish genocide. We were greeted warmly by them and presented with an elaborate feast consisting of roast pig that was rotating on a spit when we arrived, roast fish, and 20 other dishes of corn, beans, coconut, and vegetables. After welcoming festivities and the meal consumed, dancing commenced with musical accompaniment. Soon, we were invited to dance with the participants, and many of us accepted.

As we prepared to leave, our tour leader, gave a heartfelt speech of appreciation for their hospitality, which they returned in kind. All of us were fighting back tears at such a moving experience, perhaps made much more so because this remaining remnant of a people wiped out by our ancestors left us wondering how long they can survive in the modern world.

We left Baracoa for Guardalavaca along a badly rutted road, but each mile of scenery was described interestingly by our guide in both ecological and political terms. We stopped at *Bahia de Taco* for a rest and a group photo. The rest area features a statue of Alejandro de Humboldt, the cartographer for Castro's rebel band.

We later passed an ominous looking factory which is the

first industrial site we've seen, so it is striking in its contrast to the lush eastern province vegetation in which it is located. It was a joint Canadian/Cuban nickel refinery (images of Sudbury, Ont., eh?). Workers there are also a privileged strata. A billboard at the entrance exhorts those entering to "*Imagine El Futuro*," surrounding by an illustration of smoking, industrial facilities. Is this the future to be imagined? It raises the question of how does a country generate wealth, particularly when its population wants better conditions and more commodities? This signals complete immersion in the world market and all that it brings—heaven and hell, if commodities are heaven.

Seeing this plant brought to mind the condition of Cuba's workers, all represented by official unions, which, as in all socialist countries, function to assure state production norms are met and discipline the labor force rather than represent the interests of the workers. The Cuban government and its Western leftist apologists say class conflict has been suppressed, and it is the socialist government itself that represents the interests of labor. It's hard to believe many workers buy that.

Cuban anarcho-syndicalism was a major force on the island, including the IWW, militantly fighting for worker rights since the 1880s. The movement survived Spanish rule and that of a succession of Cuban dictators following the War of Independence, but has been suppressed by the Castro regime since it took over a half century ago. This is related powerfully by Frank Fernández in his *Cuban Anarchism: The History of a Movement*, which is unfortunately marred by a gratuitously sectarian introduction by its translator, Charles Bufe.

There's still a small, resilient, clandestine anarcho-syndicalist movement deep inside Cuba whose ideals have never been extinguished, that can provide a mass movement away from both state and private capitalism. The desire for an authentic Revolution, distant from the world of Ipods, still beats in many hearts on the island. May our Cuban comrades make it so.



# Obituary for Dr. Albert Hofmann

LSD's Innovator Dies at 102 by PanDoor

When I was first asked to write an obituary in the Fifth Estate for Dr. Albert Hofmann, who passed away on April 29, I felt conflicted. I was not wrestling with how to reconcile his contributions to neurochemistry and the politics of liberation; these seemed self-evident.

Rather, the question was how to write objectively about the father of LSD without talking about my personal relationship to the worlds he opened for me and millions of others.

I have come to the conclusion that I cannot. I can no more discuss Albert Hofmann's discovery in a distanced, impersonal manner than I could write about his life and death without discussing LSD. If you would like to read a more third-person account of the life of Albert Hofmann, I recommend the entry on him in Wikipedia.

But for those of us whose lives were changed by the good doctor, it is unnecessary to explain the details of why his passing touched us. And, for the uninitiated, no accounting of the facts will clarify.

## Serendipitous discovery

I learned of Hofmann's passing on May 1 during a maypole ritual at an annual Beltane gathering. The event is a homecoming for many of us; some 500 queers, pagans, anarchists and freaks of all stripes gather on May Day to celebrate the coming of spring and all of its vernal pleasures. It is a time of celebration, for dancing all night and making love openly in the fields and forests—a time of rejoicing in the ecstasy of being alive. For many of us, it is a time to trip.

And so, when one of the elders of the Faerie tribe invoked the ancestors who had passed, and announced that at the ripe old age of 102, Albert Hofmann had died, a collective gasp shot through the circle.

It was immediately evident that most of the five hundred people gathered in a circle that day not only knew who Hofmann was, but felt a special kinship with the man. At that moment, I felt truly blessed to be in such company.

My life, like the lives of millions of others, has been irrevocably changed by Hofmann's serendipitous discovery.

There is an almost mythical quality to his now-famous bicycle ride on April

16, 1943 when the Swiss chemist spontaneously began hallucinating after accidentally ingesting a small amount of LSD-25 that he had absorbed through his fingernails.

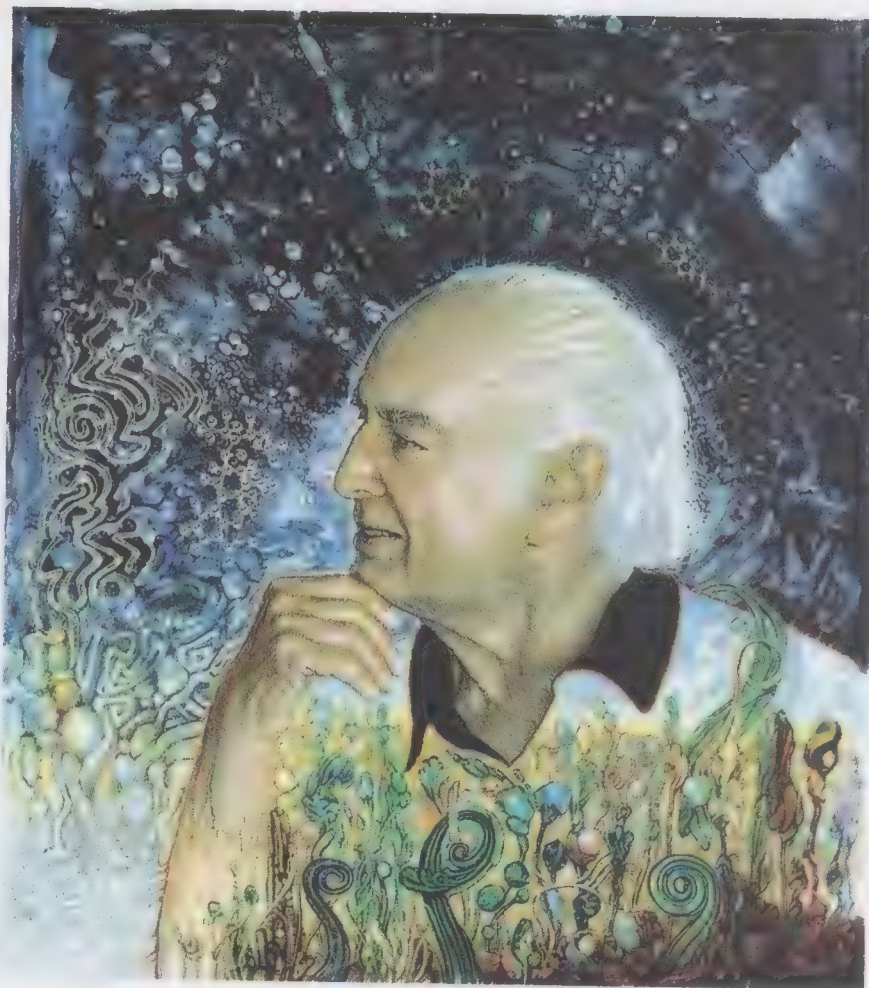
Sixty years later, the world is undoubtedly changed by the forces that were set in motion that day. It is undeniable that the drug has had a tremendous effect on the arts, culture, and technology of our world. While it is all but impossible to imagine the 1967 Summer of Love happening without LSD, it is

equally difficult to imagine the World Wide Web (many of whose innovators were profoundly affected by the drug) without the influence of what Hofmann referred to as his "problem child."

But LSD's greatest contribution to humanity (and by extension Hofmann's), was to provide an escape from the most oppressive prison of all: the gulag of the mind.

When I was 17, I tried the substance for the first time, and, like so many fel-

*Continued on Next Page*



"Portrait of Albert Hofmann" —Robert Venosa



low travelers before and since, I had my perceptions of the world ripped open.

At the end of the night, the only thing I was still certain of was that reality was infinitely more complex than my normal consciousness could grasp. To this day, I know this to be true, and it is one of the pivotal understandings that have shaped the unfolding of my life.

Ask any longtime tripper what LSD has shown them and they almost invariably will tell you a story of some moment when they had an epiphany of seeing another person not as some separate object in time-space, but as a part of a continuum in which the self is enmeshed. LSD breaks down the barriers of self/other that drive the most pathological forces in our world.

I've often been struck by the synchronicity of Hofmann's discovery taking place within a few years of the world's first nuclear war. LSD has unleashed a creative force into this world as powerful as the atom bomb.

For that, all lovers of freedom, peace, and ecstatic revelry should give a hearty thanks to that noble pioneer of human consciousness, Dr. Albert Hofmann.

The "Portrait of Albert Hofmann" on the previous page is available in an edition of 50 exemplars signed and numbered by Venosa and Hofmann. For information on prices and availability contact: roberto@venosa.com.



Albert Hofmann and Robert Venosa

Robert Venosa's paintings are in the collections of major museums. In addition to painting and sculpting, Venosa has done conceptual film design for the movie *Dune*, and *Fire in the Sky*, and *Race for Atlantis* for IMAX. Much of Venosa's work and

attendant exploits have been published in his books, *Manas Manna* (Big O), *Noospheres* (Pomegranate Artbooks), and most recently, *Illuminatus* (Robert John), which features the poetic text of Terence McKenna. His art can also be seen on a numerous CD covers, including those of Santana, Kitaro, Jimi Hendrix, and others. Robert Venosa's art can be seen at: [www.venosa.com](http://www.venosa.com).

1950-2008

## Remembering Hanon Reznikov

The Living Theatre loses a mainstay

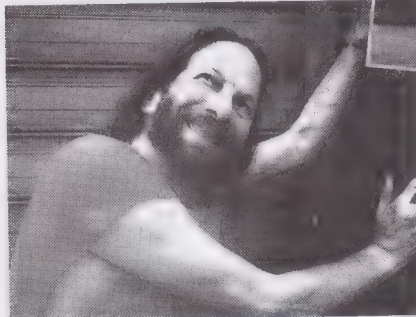
by Anu Bonobo

Because art breathes on in the legacy left with the living, death cannot defeat an artist. In this eternity of the permanent present, poems and plays and songs resist the tyranny of death. While this recognition hardly dulls the sting of mortality in the hearts of the bereaved when we lose a loved one, its message rings clearly today as we celebrate the life of the late Hanon Reznikov.

When Judith Malina and Julian Beck co-founded the anarcho-pacifist Living Theatre in the late 1940s, Hanon Reznik had not yet been born. When Hanon first saw The Living Theatre perform the politically, spiritually, and aesthetically extravagant *Paradise Now*, he was an 18-year-old Yale freshman majoring in molecular biophysics. Not too long after seeing the performance, Hanon left science for drama, and after Yale, was living in New Haven, Conn. directing plays at the Long Wharf Theatre.

When Beck's poetic journal-as-manifesto, *The Life of the Theatre*, was published by Lawrence Ferlinghetti's City Lights Books in 1972, Hanon read it before going to hear Judith and Julian give a talk in Hartford. A month after meeting Judith and Julian there, Hanon (who later changed his name to Reznikov, his family's name when they first came to America) joined them in Brooklyn where he and Judith became lovers.

Although Hanon was half Judith's age and the same age as his future stepson, Garrick Beck, (active in starting the Rainbow Family an-



Left, Hanon Reznikov, co-director with Judith Malina of the Living Theatre; —photo: Anu Bonobo. Above, the troupe on stage



nual gatherings), their love challenged and transcended boundaries. Hanon identified as pansexual and was lovers with Julian as well, although Hanon said that being lovers with the two could not be sustained. Around that time, Hanon's creative collaboration with The Living Theatre began; it would last more than 35 years.

During the early to mid 1980s, as Julian battled cancer and faced death, he remained fiercely creative to the end, speaking fresh poems for Hanon to transcribe right up until falling into a coma. Before Julian died in September 1985, he asked Hanon to protect Judith. Immediately after Julian's passing, Hanon joined Judith as co-director of The Living Theatre, and the lovers were married in 1988.

Hanon helped create a new mission statement for the collective, written in the poetic voice that has long defined the group's efforts. That beatitude of barbed-wire eloquence re-



mains the project's anchoring statement. It's hard to imagine The Living Theatre lasting as loudly and proudly as it has into the present without Hanon's loving, passionate, and exuberant stewardship.

Julian Beck had already died when I discovered his work in the late 1980s, and I would only later learn more about Judith and Hanon. I stumbled onto Beck's "Notes toward a Statement on Anarchism and Theatre" and later devoured *The Life of the Theatre* as part of my radical poetic catechism.

Etching an enduring concept into the communal psyche, The Living Theatre forged the philosophy of the "Beautiful Nonviolent Anarchist Revolution." Part mantra, part slogan, and an entirely lived praxis, this template weds the ecstatic and aesthetic to the transformation of society. Still an attractive and dangerous insight, attaching beauty and nonviolence to the incendiary notion of anarchist revolution insures that insurgent tactics be grounded in love and compassion.

For decades, anarchist pacifism has brought with it the aura of ascetic purity—of Tolstoy, Gandhi, or the Catholic Workers. To some, this scent of morality mingles too closely with authority, whether that of religious leadership, institutional protocol, or of a prescriptive edict.

### **The Living Theatre made anarchist pacifism secular and sexy**

With its unique and unwavering politics rooted in *Paradise Now*, The Living Theatre made anarchist pacifism secular and sexy—but never soft. For decades, the members have marched alongside—and distinguished themselves from—activists for whom pacifism is a safe extension of liberalism or for whom anarchism necessitates violent resistance.

Appropriately, my first face-to-face encounter with Hanon and Judith came in late August 2004 in New York City, as the collective prepared its creative contribution to the mass demonstration against the re-nomination of George Bush at the Republican National Convention. In keeping with everything we'd learned about The Living Theatre, my partner and I joined them as participants rather than spectators, to perform in the streets rather than on a stage. As important as that day was for me, finally meeting and marching with those I'd studied and admired for so long, its active expression of an ideal was for the collective just one point on an impressive, six decade continuum of combining peace and anarchy, art and life, love and resistance.

When *Paradise Now* introduced Hanon to The Living Theatre 40 years ago, he remarked, "I was very turned on by it; I found it very sexy. My sense of the event of *Paradise Now* was one of extraordinary freedom, and it seemed like the world was just beginning to figure out how free it could be."

With Judith and Julian, Hanon took the troupe's anarchist and pacifist ideals quite seriously.

He expounded, "The aspect of theater that makes it particularly interesting to us as political activists is the way the theater exists as a social model."

While hundreds of revolutionaries have dedicated their entire lives to resistance through direct action and numerous artists have sought liberty through creative expression, few have

led such a dedicated pursuit of both simultaneously—not just in theory but in daily practice.

In the last several years, in addition to traveling and performing all over the world, Hanon had been active with Judith in securing a home for The Living Theatre on Clinton Street in New York City's Lower East Side.

Just last spring, Judith and Hanon appeared on Harold Channer's talk show on the public access Manhattan Neighborhood Network, celebrating the new space, the collective's 60th anniversary, and Judith's 80th birthday. In this clip available on YouTube, Hanon describes it as "a special time," and with Judith, speaks quite lucidly about art and anarchy and enthusiastically about the end of poverty and the end of war.



**Judith Melina and Hanon Reznikov**

Approximately a year after this broadcast, with the work of The Living Theatre going strong in its new home base, Hanon suffered a massive stroke, followed by pneumonia. Just two days after protesters and revelers all over the world honored the anarchist and pagan festival of Mayday, Hanon died in Manhattan.

Still seeking wisdom and solace, I found my hard-bound, two-dimensional ver-

sion of the collective's most visionary moment. Written down by Judith and Julian some six months and 50 performances into it, the text for *Paradise Now* combines a collaborative narrative on revolution with readings from the I-Ching and teachings from Kabbalistic, Tantric, and Hasidic sources. From the Hasidic insights, I found the words I imagine Hanon would want on our lips at this time:

"Man is always passing through two doors: out of this world and into the next, and out and in again. When people are merry and dance, it sometimes happens that they catch hold of someone, who is sitting outside and grieving, pull him into the round, and make him rejoice with them. The same happens in the heart of one who rejoices: grief and sorrow draw away from him, but it is a special virtue to pursue them with courage and to draw grief into gladness, so that all the strength of sorrow may be transformed into joy."

May those who grieve losing Hanon transform their tears like this: into comfort for Judith and the collective; into preserving, promoting, and passing along the mission of The Living Theatre; into becoming the joy that always comes with the promise of revolution.

Will Swofford Interview:

[bigbridge.org/fictswwofford.htm](http://bigbridge.org/fictswwofford.htm)

Harold Channer Interviews:

1998: [youtube.com/watch?v=zVSQezDVBsQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVSQezDVBsQ)

2007: [youtube.com/watch?v=aKB5CcOB4jk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKB5CcOB4jk)



1935-2008

# Utah Phillips

The IWW and the labor movement lose a troubadour

Utah Phillips, a seminal figure in American folk music, who performed tirelessly on two continents for 38 years, died May 23 of congestive heart failure in Nevada City, California, a small town in the Sierra Nevada mountains where he lived for the last 21 years with his wife, Joanna Robinson, a freelance editor. Phillips died at home, in bed, in his sleep, next to his wife.

Born Bruce Duncan Phillips on May 15, 1935 in Cleveland, he was the son of labor organizers. Whether through this early influence or an early life that was not always tranquil or easy, by his twenties, Phillips demonstrated a lifelong concern with the living conditions of working people. He was a proud member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), an organizational artifact of early twentieth-century labor struggles that has seen renewed interest and growth in membership in the last decade, not in small part due to his efforts to popularize it.

Phillips served as an Army private during the Korean War, an experience he would later refer to as the turning point of his life. Deeply affected by the devastation and human misery he had witnessed, upon his return to the United States he began drifting, riding freight trains around the country. Destitute and drinking, Phillips got off a freight train in Salt Lake City and wound up at the Joe Hill House, a homeless shelter operated by anarchist Ammon Hennacy, a member of the Catholic Worker movement and associate of Dorothy Day.

In the creation of his performing persona and work, Phillips drew from influences as diverse as Borscht Belt comedian Myron Cohen, folksingers Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, and country stars Hank Williams and T. Texas Tyler. Over the span of the nearly four decades that followed, Phillips worked in what he referred to as "the Trade," developing an audience of hundreds of thousands



Utah Phillips at IWW Centenary, 2005, Chicago. On ends, folk singers Len Wallace and Charlie King; to Utah's right, Federico Arcos.



—photo, left: Julie Herrada

and performing in large and small cities throughout the North America, and Europe. His performing partners included Rosalie Sorrels, Kate Wolf, John McCutcheon, and Ani DiFranco.

His extensive writing and recording career included two albums with DiFranco which earned a Grammy nomination. Phillips's songs were performed and recorded by Emmylou Harris, Waylon Jennings, Joan Baez, Tom Waits, Joe Ely and others. He was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Folk Alliance in 1997.

Utah began suffering from the effects of chronic heart disease in 2004, and as his illness kept him off the road at times, he started a nationally syndicated folk-music radio show, "Loafer's Glory" on KVMR-FM.

Recalling his days on the road, he started a homeless shelter in his rural county, where down-on-their-luck men and women were sleeping under the manzanita brush at the edge of town. Hospitality House opened in 2005 and houses 25 to 30 guests a night.

## Utah's Phillip's Last Interview

The following is a portion of a transcript of a May 7 interview with Utah Phillips conducted by long-time Fifth Estate contributor, Peter Werbe. It aired on his May 11 Detroit radio show in part to provide publicity for a benefit concert for Utah held in Ann Arbor. It is available as a podcast at [wrif.com/podcast/nightcall](http://wrif.com/podcast/nightcall) for the show on that date. It follows the first two hours of phone-in talk.

Fifth Estate: Tell us about the IWW songs you sing and the stories you tell; are they outdated?

Utah Phillips: I don't sing those songs from the IWW as

artifacts. I sing them unhappily because they are just as true today as they were then. I keep singing those songs and telling those stories that say, look what we were able to do when we were organized. That past is the mirror we look into when we look at ourselves today, and say, what the hell are we doing? Right now, we're stumbling back into a Dark Age.

FE: Part of the problem today is that people don't see themselves in the traditional category of worker; they're middle-class or service worker or the like.

UP: The working class is, if you work for wages and



## Utah interview continued

you gotta boss, you're in the working class. Doesn't matter if you're a college professor or a ditch digger, and better be proud of it.

FE: You often mention tramps, hobos, and bums, in your songs and stories; what's the difference?

UP: A hobo works and wanders, a tramp dreams and wanders, and a bum drinks and wanders.

FE: Tell us about your association with the IWW.

UP: I've been a member of the IWW for over half a century and it's still my proudest association. The philosophy of industrialism—an injury to one, is an injury to all.

FE: How did you get into singing?

UP: I was backed into this trade. I didn't choose it. It's a wonderful, fine, honorable great trade, and it gave me an opportunity to explore the country and North America. Town for town, I'd beat the streets and talk to people and visit organizations. It's been a carnival. I'm just so frustrated that I can't be out there any more. Look at me now. I'm laid up. I've got serious, serious heart disease.

FE: Did you set out to be a singer?

UP: No, one night at the Joe Hill House in Salt Lake City, I realized I had run out of moves, the cops were on the

way. I had an old VW bus, it was driving cold, November rain, and I got in that bus with \$75 and a couple of other misfits and we headed East toward an uncertain future and no prospects. When I got East, I had to be told I was singing folk music; I didn't know what it was.

It took me a couple of years to realize I was a folk singer and not an unemployed organizer. I had the songs with me; I had the songs I made up, the songs I had always sung on the picket line since my mother used to take us out to them. I had a knack for telling stories; it's all one long story like everyone's life. I love telling stories; sometimes they have tunes and we sing them. The only thing I ever learned was to sing songs, tell stories, and leave town the next day.

FE: If someone asked you what is the proudest moment in your life so far, would you have a single answer?

UP: The proudest moment in my whole life is marrying the woman who has taken over my life and is taking care of me now, Joanna Robinson. It's like living with an angel. She has the warmest and deepest heart I've ever encountered anywhere. It is such a privilege to have that person so much a part of my life.

## PERIODICAL ROUND-UP by H. Read

Send your publication for review

love the letters column, "Dear Shit for Brains". (32pp, newspaper)

*Green Anarchy* #25 Spring-Summer 2008, PO Box 11331 Eugene, OR 97440, \$4ppd  
Back after a period of hibernation, more of the hardline primitivism and snappy layouts that we have all come to know and love from *GA*. Includes new pieces from John Zerzan. (92pp, magazine) [greenanarchy.org](http://greenanarchy.org)

*El Libertario* #52, February-March 2008 [nodo50.org/ellibertario](http://nodo50.org/ellibertario)  
Anarchist newspaper from Venezuela, noted for its opposition to Chavez. Probably the best anarchist periodical in the Americas. (20pp newspaper, in Spanish, but English version online)

*Modesto Anarcho* #5 (Fall 2007), #6 (Winter 2008), PO Box 3027, Modesto CA 95353 \$2 [geocities.com/anarcho209](http://geocities.com/anarcho209)  
Documenting the very active anarchist scene in Modesto. (20pp)

*The Nuclear Resister* #148 (April 8, 2008), PO Box 43383. Tucson, AZ 85733 [nuclearresister.org](http://nuclearresister.org)

Anti-war and anti-nuclear civil resistance newspaper with and emphasis on prisoner support. (12pp, newspaper)

*Profane Existence* #56 Spring 2008  
PO Box 18051, Minneapolis MN 55418, [www.profaneexistence.org](http://www.profaneexistence.org)  
\$30/yr subscription  
Wide-ranging coverage of bands and issues in the anarcho-punk scene; comes with a free CD. This issue features the art of Amy Toxic. (82pp, magazine)

*Student Insurgent* #19.4, Suite One, 1228, ERB Memorial Union, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403 [sialtmedia@hotmail.com](mailto:sialtmedia@hotmail.com)  
Radical newspaper at the University of Oregon in Eugene; this issue is more anarchist than some recent ones. (28pp, newspaper)

*Upping the Anti* #6, 998 Bloor Street W., PO Box 10571, Toronto, ON M6H 4H9, Canada [uppingtheanti.org](http://uppingtheanti.org)  
\$10ppd Canada (in US order through AK Press)

By far the best of the anti-imperialist magazines in English which come out of the broadly anti-authoritarian milieu (although the competition is pretty thin), *UTA* features reflections of the intersection of theory and action. (196pp, journal)

*Anchorage Anarchy* #11 December 2007, \$1 from BAD Press, PO Box 230332, Anchorage AK 99523  
[bbrigade@world.std.com](mailto:bbrigade@world.std.com)  
Individualist anarchist periodical from Alaska. (12pp)

*Black Flag* #226, BM Hurricane London, WC1N 3XX UK  
[black\\_flag@lycos.co.uk](mailto:black_flag@lycos.co.uk)  
This long-running anarchist periodical returns, mostly with historically-focused articles on the anarchist movement. (40pp, magazine)

*Building A Successful Antiwar Movement: Tools and Methods for People Organizing to End the War*  
[myspace.com/beyondthechoir](http://myspace.com/beyondthechoir)  
How to organize anti-war resistance. (16pp, newspaper)

*The Carp* #9, PO Box 336, Red Wing, MN 55066 [wadenhoe@redwing.net](mailto:wadenhoe@redwing.net)  
Anti-war, environmentalist paper. (8pp, newspaper)

*Earth First! Journal*, v28#4 May-June 2008, PO Box 3023, Tucson, AZ 85702 \$25/yr subscription [earthfirstjournal.org](http://earthfirstjournal.org)  
After I moved back east, I didn't read the *EFJ* for a long time, and am still kicking myself for being so stupid. Good writers, great coverage, and I





# The '60s, 40 Years Later No Chicago in Denver

National Guard troops advance on unarmed demonstrators, Chicago, August 1968, at Democratic Convention. —photo: Fifth Estate file.

by Bernard Marszalek

**F**orty years ago, like today, the country found itself in an unpopular war of imperial domination to vanquish, not “Islamofascism,” but Communism. And, like then, the political system was thoroughly corrupt and in the hands of a cabal of stooges with nightmarish plans.

Like so many others, when an election year rolls around and party politics rules the “news” with its loathsome trivia and journalistic manipulations, I long for refuge in an idyllic retreat deep in a forest far away from all media. But that isn’t an option for me, nor, I suspect for most people.

So, what to do? How do we express our disgust in a creative and non-destructive way? Let me recap a bit of personal history to provide a context for thoughts I have regarding this year and how to approach it.

## Active in anarcho-surrealist group

In the Sixties, I was active in the anarcho-surrealist group that founded Solidarity Bookshop in Chicago. Solidarity was established in a working-class neighborhood on the North side near Lincoln Park. We published a neo-Wobbly journal, *Rebel Worker*, reprinted obscure insurrectionary pamphlets, issued broadsides condemning the outrage *du jour*, and celebrated the suppressed history of the free spirit and did what today, I guess, would be called “performance art.”

The *Rebel Worker* was distributed nationally and we achieved a bit of celebrity among the politically aware cultural fringe, so it didn’t come as much of a surprise when, in late summer 1967, we were visited by anti-war activist, Jerry Rubin, who introduced us to the idea of staging a “Youth International Party” festival in Chicago during the same week as the Democrat convention the following year. The Yippies were created as a means of politicizing the hippie phenomenon, then all the rage in the press after the 1967 “Summer of Love” in San Francisco.

Not surprisingly, we felt that the whole idea was too wacky and beside the point. We had no interest in “politicizing” the hippies; our project was to “politicize” the youth of Chicago, who were hardly hippies. The hippies at that time were a suburban subculture. By the way, many of us associated with Solidarity had “sterling” working-class pedigrees. My father, for instance, in his youth was a Wobbly and then, after establishing a family, a member of the Steelworkers union. Given the industrial economy of Chicago, it was a strong union town with a well renowned history of labor struggles, which we proudly referred to in our public encounters.

The bi-coastal Yippie “warlords/clowns/promoters” weren’t interested in our point of view, of course; they wanted recruits for their demonstration. As the idea of this crazy event took form and developed a media momentum in what was called the underground or alternative press of that era, I traveled to New York to interview Abbie Hoffman for the Chicago SEED, a local free newspaper, in the Fall of 1967. My intent was to ridicule the whole thing.

But when I arrived for the interview, I found Abbie beside himself with glee that he, Rubin and Paul Krassner (editor of the satirical journal *The Realist*) had recruited Allen Ginsburg, Timothy Leary and a number of rock groups, including Detroit’s legendary MC5. It was apparent that they were going to pull off their Chicago escapade no matter if they had local support or not.

Furthermore, the near victory of anti-war Senator Eugene McCarthy over Lyndon Johnson in New Hampshire’s presidential primary created turmoil in the Democrat Party. This, added to the political assassinations of King and Kennedy, urban insurrections, and generalized international bedlam, the Yippies knew they were guaranteed a huge stage for their political theater.



I'll skip the rest of the history to fast forward to that summer and to a personal account of that week in August. As I said, the rush of events throughout 1968 guaranteed not only a huge turnout of hippies and anti-war activists, but also politicians of all left sectarian stripes, street fighters with minimal politics beyond trashing pigs, and even some local, politically savvy street gangs like the Puerto Rican "Young Lords" made an appearance.

The Daley Machine, to script, performed magnificently, as only an entrenched, corrupt city political machine can do. Too stupid to understand how to react to a gaggle of absurdists proposing to descend on Chicago to nominate Pegasus the Pig for president, the city both threatened them with arrest and tried at the same time to sequester them four miles north of the convention center in Lincoln Park. While many of the Yippies came for the fun, games, and drugs, others, not so inexperienced, expected violence and weren't disappointed.

I have a very clear recollection of the evening after the big demonstration downtown, the one where the whole world was "watching," when folks returning to their camps in Lincoln Park, two miles north of the Loop (downtown Chicago), began pelting a patrol car with rocks, bricks and bottles. The lone cop, frightened and fearful of a trap and not able to see in the darkness the source of the bombardment, jumped out of his car and, using the door as a shield, knelt down behind it and began shooting wildly to chase away his assailants.

Bits of brick from a building behind me exploded from the impact of a bullet and shattered to the ground and several of us ran out of the area faster than we thought our legs could propel us. That evening, those of us who lived on the North Side of Chicago, smelled the tear gas emanating from the park and could not venture out for fear of encountering cops seeking revenge. This wasn't the Yippie party in the park my friends and I expected.

The confrontations that occurred and have been memorialized in film footage, like Haskell Wexler's *Medium Cool*, and in song, only offer a partial view of what happened that week. For instance, the local white street kids, many organized by Rising Up Angry, who often would be likely to beat up longhairs, hesitantly ventured into the hippie encampments. Of course, they were instantly won over by free drugs galore. And, when it came to street fighting, some of them got into it and I suspect that it was the gang kids, along with the street-fighting politicians, who were pelting the cop car, not the out-of-town hippies who merely wanted to bliss out after the evening's police riot on Michigan Avenue.

The mass preventive arrests some politically active Chicagoans expected thankfully never occurred. And others, not so paranoid, who volunteered as movement security in the park, donning motorcycle helmets and carrying baseball bats, by their presence may have been a real and necessary deterrent, keeping police violence to a minimum in the encampment and protecting a semi-liberated drug zone for several days.

Another, more pleasant recollection, was traveling around Chicago and, because of my beard and long hair, having peace signs flashed to me by blacks and Latinos, both young and old. An odd and wonderful sense of solidarity existed for a time in Chicago among white freaks and the city's so-

called "minorities." The appearance of standing up to "the Man" resonated throughout the communities that faced the oppression of the Chicago pigs daily.

The theater of that week extended months afterwards during the trial of the Chicago 8, Rubin, Hoffman, Tom Hayden, Bobby Seale, and others, on riot charges. For a while, another form of solidarity fused with the traditional peace movement, the Black Panthers, and Yippies all thrown into a courtroom to face the consequences of disrupting a convention that nominated a loser: Hubert Humphrey.

But what to make of this event? Was the whole Yippie spectacle nonsensical, if not completely unethical? The only answer is, yes. Bringing a bunch of naïve kids to Chicago for a "Festival of Life" that the organizers knew would turn violent is hardly a practice to duplicate.

The considerable cultural residue served the purpose of myth-building the 60's as a "Decade of Youth Rebellion" (as opposed to a more appropriate appellation, for instance, a Decade of Imperial Adventures), but beyond that how should we view the events of that August?

Obviously, it galvanized an oppositional culture in a way that Woodstock or the Summer of Love could not. And, while I have emphasized the Yippies, many people came to Chicago expecting to protest the convention peacefully, and despite the difficulties of securing the permits, there was a huge non-violent march to the convention. That demonstration, headed by among others, the popular black comedian and civil rights activist, Dick Gregory, consisted of an older crowd and was racially diverse, including many locals who attended to protest Mayor Richard Daley's police state tactics as much as the Democrats and the Vietnam war.

I have not read any memoirs of the Sixties and probably never will, so I can't say for certain whether it has been documented that the experience of the convention events, either directly or vicariously through the extensive media coverage, contributed to the demise of the national student movement. A movement that fragmented and repudiated a vocal, if ultimately ineffectual, anarchist option at Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) conferences in the late 60's and took a turn towards sectarianism and spectacular, pseudo-redemptive violence. A dead end, literally, for some, and figuratively for a viable resistance.

After all these years, activists, not to mention the general populace, have few illusions that party politics amount to anything but an enclosure: that working in the political arena, given the lock-hold of the corporations, will lead to any progressive benefit. This despite the advanced star-making methodology (the Spectacle continues to gain sophistication) that has propelled Barack Obama into party leadership and has convinced many people that he represents some significant hope. With political expression circumscribed, should we be surprised that people grasp for hope that change can be affected only through the electoral process?

Using the stage afforded by a Democrat convention to petition the Party for a "progressive platform" that offers the citizenry, at best, something like neo-liberalism-lite is, of course, a waste of time. Electoral politics is pigshit to paraphrase

*Continued on Page 55*





### Continued from Page Two

ago. He was well known as the "gentle bandit," because he robbed banks with toy guns and escaped by bike. The Italian director, Enzo Monteleone, made a 1999 movie about his life with the actor Stefano Accorsi performing Horst.

After his death, 108 artists from all over the world dedicated a mail art work to him entitled "Bandit by Bicycle." After months of research and collecting material about his life, we published a web site, that display documents, articles, initiatives, and books about Horst, as well as his drawings, poems, tales, pieces of writing and other work born from his creativity. Although most of the web site is in Italian, you can read the biography in English and Spanish, and enjoy the mail art section. Go to [horstfantazzini.net](http://horstfantazzini.net).

This project would never have been realized without the help of Patrizia "Pralina" Diamante, Horst's last mate.

**The Staff**  
Florence, Italy

### Rip Off Uncle Sam!

Greetings from the Texas gulag! I was very pleasantly surprised to receive a copy of the Spring 2008 issue of Fifth Estate. Words cannot express how grateful I am for your kind generosity. I'm in a "super seg" cell 24/7 and receive virtually no mail, so you might imagine how pleased I am to receive any intelligent media or correspondence.

In the piece by Romeo Hardin, "Tired of Being Stepped On?," he writes, "...we can reason as a people that it is wrong to live off of or rely on the government for food, clothes, and shelter..." Also, during the course of my several years of reading anarchist/anti-

authoritarian essays, the issue of accepting government assistance has inevitably been cast in a disparaging light.

I receive food, clothes, shelter, and medical care from the state and, in the Texas prison vernacular, I don't hit a lick at a snake in return. I don't consider myself to be "self-destructive, lazy and wrong," as Hardin says. By the time I complete serving my 25 year sentence in 2014, I will have cost the state over \$875,000. My only regret is that my stay didn't cost ten times as much!

The average citizen works for most of their adult life, and, for all that time, Uncle Sam has his greedy hand in his pocket, robbing him or her of their hard-earned dollar. For that same citizen to say, "I'm not going to put my hand in my good Uncle's pocket; I'm going to turn the other cheek," seems an awfully

Christian attitude to take for an anarchist. It seems like the correct attitude would be to keep Uncle Sam's hand out of my pocket while plunging both hands in *his* pockets, up to the wrists, and taking him for all he's worth!

A good anarchist might want to keep his or her recorded earnings below the poverty level, preferably working for cash, while at the same time signing up for every government assistance program available and petitioning for more. Why throw a monkey wrench when you can be a monkey wrench? Every state dollar spent buttering your toast is one less dollar Uncle Sam will have free to buy bullets to kill innocent Iraqis, or to subsidize billion dollar multinational corporations.

**OR**  
Huntsville, Texas

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## Bizzy Bees

**Dear ants and other creatures in resistance:**

The Beehive Collective is geared up to print another round of Plan Colombia posters and we'd like to share this opportunity for other groups to go in on a print run with us. In the printing world there are initial set up costs that make it a lot cheaper to print things like posters and books in larger amounts.

So, to make this printing as cost effective as possible we'd like to find collaborators so that all of us get inexpensive posters to bolster our fundraising efforts and raise awareness about crucial issues. If we buy in bulk it will cost around \$2 per poster.

We usually distro the poster for a \$10-\$20 sliding scale donation. As we write, our North American bees are in our busiest year yet. We're on the final haul of the Meso America Resist graphic and the initiation of a new Graphic Campaign on Coal mining in Appalachia. We're hoping to complete both of these in time for counter events during the Republican and Democratic national conventions.

Meanwhile, for over a year, bees have been swarming in South America, sharing and distributing Beehive graphics for free and facilitating workshops on globalization.

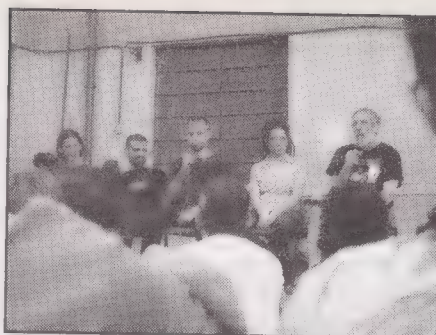
In the last 15 months the *abya yala* bees have distributed hundreds of Plan Colombia posters and facilitated almost 100 workshops throughout Colombia, Venezuela & Ecuador with aspirations of cross pollinating in Panama later this year, as we as distributing another 500 posters. *Las abejas del sur* have focused on working with the ants—those communities depicted in the posters resisting the effects of US foreign policy and multinational interests in the north Andean region.

In order to continue the distribution of free popular education tools to north Andean communities in resistance, the Beehive Collective is offering a collaborative print run/bulk rate on Plan Colombia posters to organizations and collectives that are working for justice. If your group is interested please respond quickly so the bees in South America can continue their efforts.

the bees

[beehivecollective.org](http://beehivecollective.org)

[polinizaciones.blogspot.com](http://polinizaciones.blogspot.com)



John Zerzan, rt., speaks on anti-civilization at a February anarchist gathering in Sao Paulo.

## Anarchy in Brazil

An anarchist and anti-cultural event called "Carnaval Revolução," was held in São Paulo 2-4 of February.

With more than 200 hours of scheduled activities, the event offered a huge program full of debates, talks, workshops, films screenings, cycling, musical shows, parties, expositions, and autonomous group performances. Two main sites hosted the activities (Espaço Impróprio and the Escola Profª Marina Cintra) which included subjects such as animal liberation, the urban social occupation in Rio de Janeiro, queer resistance, independent media, libertarian pedagogy, veganism, permaculture, autonomous spaces, anti-civilization perspectives, anarcho-punk today and many more.

The U.S. anarchist, John Zerzan, was present to give talks about primitivism, green anarchy, post-left, autonomy and resistance, with space and opportunity for large and clarifying debates on that matter which in the anarchist milieu is kind of new here but is beginning to take their first steps in defense of the wild.

It was a great gathering with hundreds of people from many parts of Brazil attending, and was very important for us to share skills, experiences, ideas and contacts to future efforts.

There are photos and more reports at [ellenvicious.multiply.com/photos/album/31](http://ellenvicious.multiply.com/photos/album/31)

Marcelo Yokoi  
Araraquara, Brazil

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Fifth Estates

## CrimethInc.

*Continued from Page 41*

in a particularly acute footnote: "Ideology creeps quickly into any language, languages that seek to oppose it no less. If you want to experience passion and liberty, the last thing you want to do is make up slogans about them." Of course, this is hilarious—because like everything CWC has ever done—ER is a cup that overflows with clever and pithy made-up slogans about passion and liberty on almost every page!

The collective author continues: "This footnote itself is a pernicious little thing, just more abstractions about abstractions—put the book down, stop conceptualizing, get out there and *live*, whatever that means!"

Even though CWC has changed since the early days when the Inside Front punk magazine or the tabloid Harbinger were first published, ER contains enough energy to turn on the dazzling lights of previous CWC manifestations.

Since the older CWC texts would breathe vigorous life back into "lifestyle anarchism" every time some indignant platformist tried to kill it, it's a little sad to see Rolling Thunder stray so far from the absurd allure of CWC's crustifarian roots and publish so many strong and serious texts including a new one by anarchist scholar David Graeber.

I found myself rereading the "One Million Years of Do-It-Yourself Culture!" section of ER, the passages struck me as incredibly refreshing—even though I doubt anyone in CWC would ever write them today. To end the review, here's a snippet of that section, since this outrageous passage captures so much about what I've always loved and others have always loathed about CWC:

"For over 50,000 generations, our ancestors didn't shave their legs or armpits or wear deodorant. They scavenged food like modern trash pickers do, traveled like hitchhikers riding rivers and hopping ocean currents around the world, celebrated life with folk music made by their friends, passed down folk culture they devised.

"You can bet some of them had dreadlocks, some homemade tattoos and scarification, some patches proclaiming their allegiances. There used to be as many human beings in the world as there are punk rockers, now."



# Tarot Cards & the Left

*Continued from Page 14*

vindictive" persona, intending to intimidate real or imaginary opponents in order to get its way with the least possible resistance. The fact that, in addition to the current president, the three major presidential candidates have all threatened massive bombings of recalcitrant nations suggests that their "irrationality" is, from a state perspective, not irrational at all, but standard policy.

The US naturally has concerns over the prospect of Iranian power and, just as obviously, is quite willing to employ war as a continuation of its politics. While speculation on specifically what a state will do and when it will do it is mostly guesswork, the fact is that as it now stands, the US military is badly overextended. Beyond its deteriorating equipment and exhausted troops, the military has little strategic leverage due to its engagement in Iraq.

An attack on Iran would immediately make US soldiers more vulnerable than they already are due to probable retaliation by Shiite forces in Iraq that have mostly refrained from engaging the occupying army. It is more likely that it is this very strategic and tactical weakness that is accounting for increased US bellicosity, as the administration hopes that the threats of a putatively irrational lame duck president will achieve the political goals that its military cannot. In this regard, leftist warnings about the trigger-happy president and his pending attack on Iran do the government's bidding.

Regarding the ongoing war in Iraq, nationally syndicated columnist, Norman Solomon critiques the "path of least resistance" arguments of the anti-war movement, noting that the propensity to criticize the war for being "unwinnable," a rhetorical ploy designed to appeal to US patriotism, has found itself snookered when faced with media propaganda that the military's "surge" "is working."

Solomon correctly stresses that wars should not be criticized for being unsuccessful, but because they are state mass murder waged for empire. Similarly with capitalism; criticism should not be limited to its crises. Recessions, and for most of its history, depressions, are part and parcel of capitalism. A fevered focus on anticipating the next recession frequently implies that economic downturns are avoidable or result from individual or corporate misdeeds rather than capitalism's systemic definitions.

Criticism of capitalism should not point to its (prospective) "bad" elements through forecasting and bemoaning depressions, but instead stress the intrinsic relationship uniting capitalism's booms and slumps. The inherent exploitation and wastefulness of capitalism is ever present if one is only willing to look, not least during its booms. A system of speculative-based perpetual expansion and rapacious consumption predicated on the extraction of profit from wage labor should be loathed not seasonally, but always.

Moreover, the hyperbolic tones of these warnings are ill suited to describing the evolution of depressions. Forgotten is that the Great Depression did not arrive all at once with the stock market crash, but instead developed gradually in fits and starts throughout the early 1930s. Similarly ignored is that a rather intense recession has wracked the US economy, on and off, since 1973.

Profit, Robert Brenner demonstrates in *The Boom and the Bubble*, has diminished every decade since the end of the post-war expansion. The marked decline in the standard of living for all but the wealthy over even just the past several years should raise suspicion at those looking away from the present in the name of proclaiming that soon it's *really* going to be bad.

Notwithstanding their sci-fi entertainment value, attempts to forecast doomsday scenarios preclude a meaningful apprehension of the horrors of the present. Raoul Vaneigem writes in *Revolution of Everyday Life* that whatever the future brings, it will be natural, as it will be ours.

Indeed, while many take famous dystopian novels like Huxley's *Brave New World* as dire warnings to be heeded, they can be more critically appreciated as caricaturized depictions of the present. Fixating on future woes displaces attention from critical analysis to feelings of dread.

What gets lost is that, boom or bust, daily life for most people in the world today is one of toil, suffering, alienation and pain, if not worse. The challenge should not be to try to wake the somnolent with chimeras of ever worsening suffering, but to denaturalize the present until it becomes apparent and unbearable. The nightmare is already with us. If that is not understood, then that is the problem.

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## Car Bomb *Continued from Page 37*

used by jihadists against Soviet soldiers and Afghan royalists, secularists, leftists, college professors, and women's rights groups. The graduates of this State-supported terrorist infrastructure later authored explosions in Kashmir, Chechnya, the parking garage of the World Trade Center in 1993, in front of US embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam in 1998, and throughout Occupied Iraq right now.

Davis's history starts with a horse-drawn wagon stuffed with scrap metal and dynamite before being detonated at noon on Wall Street in front of the offices of plutocrat J.P. Morgan in September 1920, killing at least 40, wounding more than 200, and littering the streets with \$80,000 in cash that was blown out of nearby financial offices. (Mario Buda, an Italian immigrant connected with the Galleanist anarchist group, had planned the blast to intimidate the government into releasing Sacco and Vanzetti from jail.)

The book concludes with the cars and trucks driven by Sunni Muslim suicide bombers through the checkpoints into Baghdad's Green Zone more than eighty years later. Along the way, Davis dips into other vehicle bombings in British-occupied Palestine, French-occupied Algiers, downtown Saigon in the early 1960s, the University of Wisconsin's Army Mathematics Research Center in 1970, Belfast, Beirut, Soviet-occupied Kabul, Sri Lanka, Barcelona, Bogotá, Lima, Oklahoma City, Riyadh, Grozny and elsewhere.

Perpetrators include Maoist rebels, violent religious extremists, all manner of ethnic separatists and anti-colonial nationalists, soldiers of the Sicilian mafia, and cocaine cartel hit men. And, just as traffic will only get worse, the odds for seeing more car bombs on the streets in the future will only get better.



## Fifth Estate Interview

# Organizing for Anarchism in Ireland

The Fifth Estate sat down with Andrew Flood from the Workers Solidarity Movement (WSM), an Irish anarchist group, who was on a 43 city speaking tour of North America. Walker Lane conducted the interview April 16 at the Baile Corcaigh Irish Pub in Detroit's Corktown district.

The talk Andrew gave later in the evening described the group's involvement in anti-war and abortion rights organizing, opposition to a gas pipeline, and participation in community based movements. Descriptions of these struggles and more information are at their web site, [www.wsm.ie](http://www.wsm.ie).

**Fifth Estate:** Describe your group for us.

**Andrew Flood:** The Workers Solidarity Movement is an anarchist-communist organization, set up in 1984. It has grown in the last ten years to about 70 members which, in a country the size of Ireland, is quite significant. We are involved in a pretty central way in a lot of social struggles.

**FE:** Describe one of your community-based campaigns.

**AF:** In the 1990s, we successfully fought a water tax where the government was forced to cancel it, but they came back with a tax on refuse pick up, basically a trash collection charge figuring it was easier to force people to pay since if refuse isn't collected you have a problem quite quickly.

We were part a coalition of groups that built a mass-based community campaign against a switchover from progressive to flat-rate taxation. In 2003, at the peak of that struggle, we brought city refuse collection to a halt for a couple of weeks. It involved thousands of households. The Dublin campaign peaked when the council stopped collecting the bins of non-payers in 2004.

Across the city, the campaign said, "All bins or no bins." Trucks were blockaded and held for as long as ten days and collection ground to a halt. Court injunctions were issued against anyone interfering with collection and allowed police to throw anyone blockading a truck directly into jail. Twenty-two people, including a nursing mother, were jailed, and dozens more brought before the courts.

Under this pressure, the campaign fragmented, although in my area of Dublin, four years later, most people are still not paying and the council has not dared to impose non-collection. We had to do a lot of day-to-day, door-to-door organizing to get this level of involvement.

**FE:** What is the nature of the anarchist movement in Ireland?

**AF:** Because of our rapid growth in recent years, a lot of our members are young, but we don't have the same generation gap that appears to be the case in the U.S. The groups I've spoken to in North America have mostly members in their late teens, twenties, and some in their thirties, but that's it.

**FE:** Much of the North American anarchist movement is very youth oriented and is often culturally separated from the larger community. What allows Irish anarchists entrance into popular, non-anarchist movements and struggles of ordinary people in Ireland?

**AF:** Most significantly is that we set out concretely to do that. That's our ambition, so we try, and because we try, it's possible to succeed. It helps being part of an organization that's been around for a long time. Irish anarchists are an outward looking movement, in general, not just our organization, that seek ways to communicate with the average person or worker. A lot of the U.S. movement seems quite obsessed with intra-

movement discussion and everything very much more inwardly directed.

It's not necessarily simple to involve yourselves in community struggles, but it's not that difficult. Particularly when people are involved in struggles that are entering into confrontations with the state and have moved beyond lobbying politicians. People are often looking for allies and are quite open to any half-way sensible approach regardless of one's political label.

**FE:** Do people in popular struggles react negatively when you say you're an anarchist?

**AF:** Nowadays, no. Fifteen years ago, I probably would have said I was an anti-state socialist because the word anarchist then would have meant punk rock or something like that, and people wouldn't have understood what I meant. But, over the past ten years the media has often focused on anarchist involvement and used that to attack struggles. But people can also get a positive thing out of that if they are identifying with the same campaign the anarchists are.

**FE:** Do you think your group can act as a model for anarchist organizing?

**AF:** The goal of my tour is to inspire local anarchists to get things a bit more organized. The situation we have in Ireland is all very positive since if you go back a decade the anarchist movement was tiny, less than twenty people. Today, the movement is comprised of a few hundred people involved in numerous struggles. I think a lot of U.S. anarchists are feeling dispirited at the moment, having retreated in the post-globalization period that crashed after 9/11. The message is that even with relatively small numbers, you can build something quite meaningful in a short period of time.

When the Dublin city council levied a tax on garbage pick-up, a mass movement organized residents to refuse to pay. City trucks were blocked when they tried to skip the homes of those who withheld the tax. —photo: Andrew Flood





# SCHOOL FREE DRUG ZONE

A Reality Check from Fifth Estate Magazine, POB 201016, Ferndale MI 48220



# The 60s, 40 Years Later

Continued on Page 49

the surrealists' derision of popular French novels of their day. I am dubious, to say the least, that we can use any current party formation to build from local, practical, grassroots efforts and create a rhizomic phenomenon on a national level. However, to use the media circus to highlight a new kind of politics, not as a program, but as a paradigm, would be a worthwhile aim.

The biggest difference between 1968 and today is the development across the nation of a rich diversity of activists, in all arenas, consciously developing their autonomy and seeking new ways of securing their successes as they cultivate community expression. This is the radical, oppositional movement that didn't exist forty years ago; contrary to how the 60's has been marketed, while that period experienced an explosive growth of social animation in many areas, the depth, the rootedness of the institutions created back then doesn't compare to those developing today.

But the question remains. How to use the media to draw attention to what is essentially, a grassroots movement for radical democracy? Obviously the media has its own superficial agenda so, for example, the festival aspect of the 1968 Yippie convention played to the media's desire to capture ten seconds of "weirdness" and was essentially meaningless. I remember both Leary and Ginsburg as they made their appearance at Lincoln Park with the media documenting their presence and then disappearing with their cameras as soon as the celebrities departed: a pseudo event if ever there was one.

I would contrast that episode with one I witnessed in Birmingham, England at the 1998 G-7 meeting. Activists from a wide array of groups from across England created space to demonstrate an alternative society to the one represented by

the leaders of the capitalist powers. While the heads-of-state conferred to strategize their manipulations of their respective populations, activists found a municipally owned, deserted, junk-strewn lot near a public housing project and transformed it into a little park and demonstration center.

They brought the neighbors into their planning process and gained their assistance in cleaning up the lot and hauling good soil to plant a few trees and bushes and a vegetable garden. They constructed a simple playground for kids, who gleefully helped out from the beginning; built some benches and tables for picnics and erected a few tents for demonstration projects, meetings and music. Their idea was to erect a site not only for the media to attend while covering the G-7, but also to leave it improved as a gift to the community.

Of course, there was a major demonstration of thousands and there was a Peoples Assembly in a hotel in the Birmingham city center, complete with workshops and presentations, but that assemblage in the vacant lot was so clever and attractive (and "photogenic") that they got tons of media representative showing up every day for almost a week.

The prospect of another confrontational Chicago '68 in Denver, which the media may fantasize about, needs to be firmly dispelled with an event that shows how resourceful and positive, how dignified and powerful people can be working to build a better society.

The Democrats coming to Denver may induce near-hysteria on the convention floor with their hyped-up media creation, and they may even delude themselves and others into thinking they are "working for change." Those in communities across the country working to create real change know that it comes not by wishing for it, or asking for it, or hoping for it. Only small change comes that way. Real change, like freedom, or human rights doesn't come to those who plead for it. It doesn't come at all, really. It must be taken.

## Books from the Barn Summer Sale

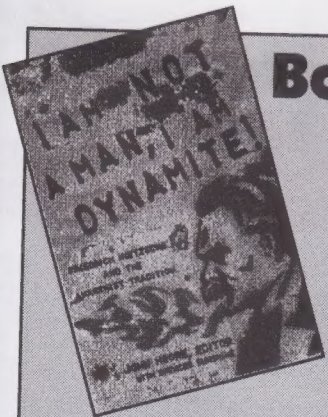
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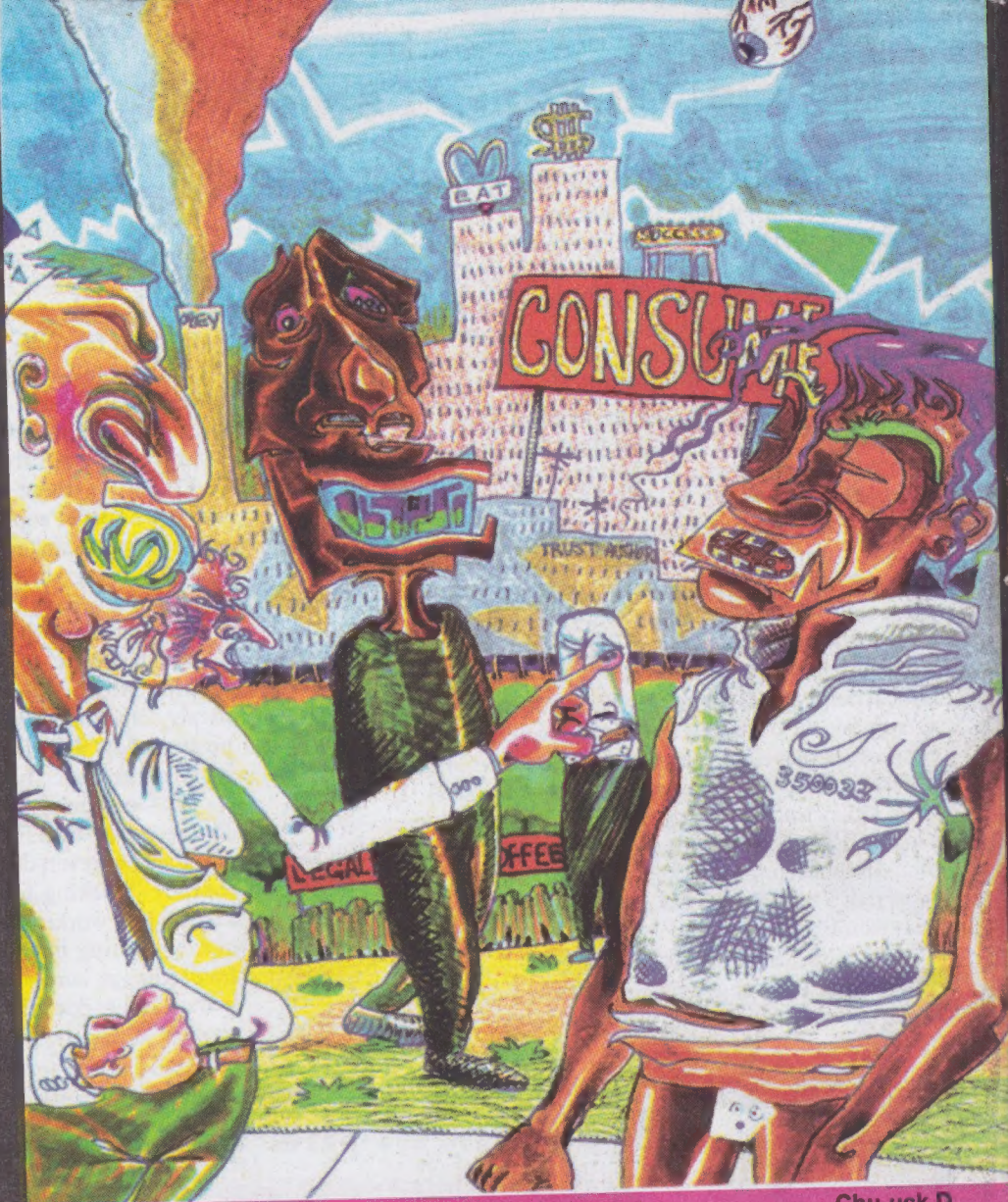
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of all slavery  
consists in  
taking the product  
of another's  
labor by force. It is  
immaterial  
whether this force  
be founded upon  
ownership of the  
slave or  
ownership of the  
money that he  
must get to  
live. ”

--Leo Tolstoy



—Chu-uck D

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